"THE MAN WHO LAUGHS!"

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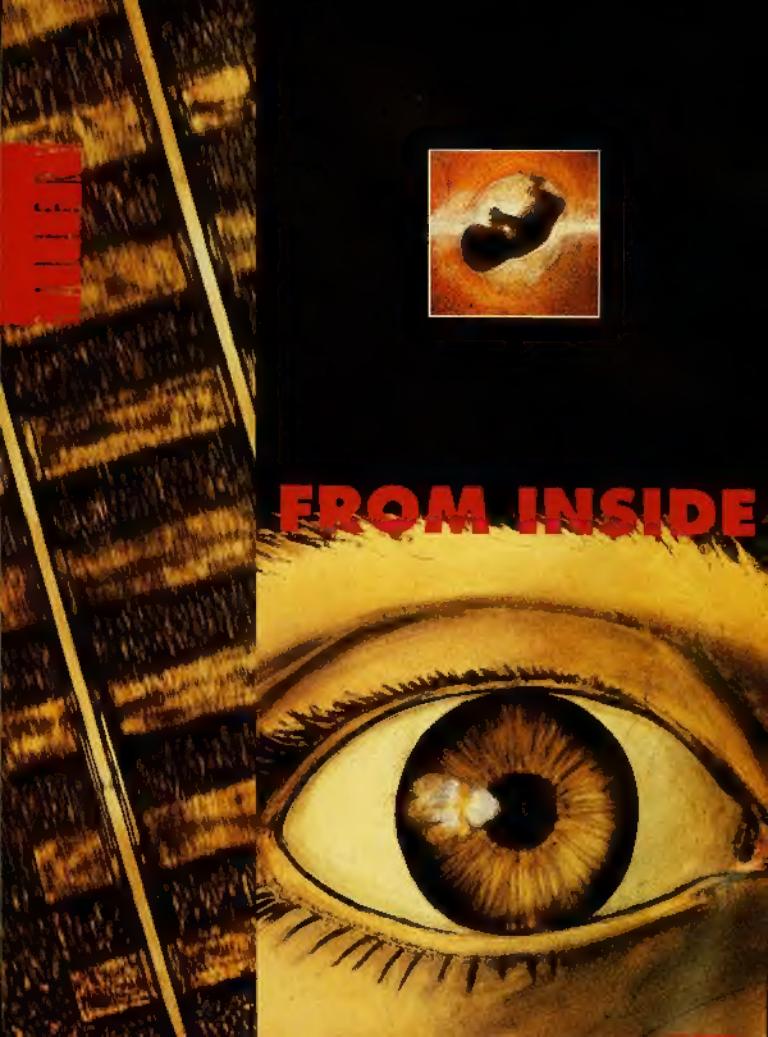

KILLER
FROM INSIDE

JOHN BERGIN

has created an atmosphere of perpetual darkness and droning ambience. His artistry lies not so much in his ability to maintain this consistently dark vision (which he does with a vengeance), but in his ability to build a rich and complex world inside this singular dimension. He has an uncanny ability to dance right on the edge of suffocating nihilism, while providing just enough oxygen to sustain life. While the beauty of his art is uplifting, its devastating message sends out a crushing blow.

FROM INSIDE is an apocalyptic tale of a young woman who wakes up in a world of nightmares within nightmares. She finds herself on a long train making her way across landscapes of desolation and despair. Rivers of blood, collapsed structures, mountains of snow, and a plague of death threaten the train's passengers, while the young woman contends with these and various internal struggles such as hunger, the memories of her lost husband, and her biggest internal "threat", the imminent birth of her baby. The complexities of her deep personal dilemma (is there anything left of the world for her baby to be born into?) and the dark surrealism of her world force her to make significant discoveries and decisions concerning her life and the life of her unborn child.

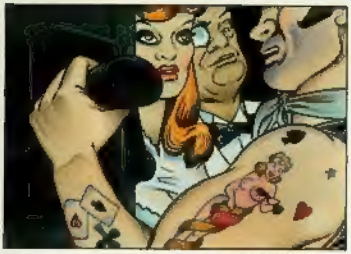
John Henry Bergin was born on April 6, 1966. He is married to Carolyn.
They currently reside in Kansas City, Missouri.

FROM INSIDE is published by Kitchen Sink Press.

THERE WAS ONCE A RICH SHIPOWNER WHO WAS EXTREMELY BORED. HE HAD TRAVELED ALL OVER THE WORLD ON HIS COMPANY'S SHIPS WHICH HE HAD INHERITED FROM HIS FATHER. HIS FORTUNE INCREASED EVERY TIME HE WENT ON A TRIP, YET EVEN THIS FAILED TO BRING HIM PLEASURE.
PARTNERS & COMPANY

MAX DECIDED TO THROW HIMSELF INTO THE CONQUEST OF WOMEN TO FEEL THE THRILL OF ADVENTURE ONCE AGAIN...UNTIL THE DAY HE MET ANNETTE.

HE MARRIED THAT SIREN ONE EVENING. BUT THEN AGAIN, IN SPITE OF ALL HER BEST EFFORTS, AFTER A WHILE, HE BEGAN TO WHISTLE TO HIMSELF, A SURE SIGN OF HIS GREAT MORAL LASSITUDE.
ONE DAY ANNETTE DECIDED TO DISCOVER WHAT WENT ON BELOW THE GOLD AND WHITE STATE ROOMS OF THE SHIP.
WHEN SHE DANCED HER SIREN DANCE, SHE OFTEN THOUGHT ABOUT THE MEN WHO WORKED DOWN THERE. MAYBE SHE WAS REMEMBERING THE SAILORS SHE HAD MET IN PORT BEFORE THAT VERY REFINED PARTY WHERE SHE HAD MET AND DAZZLED THE RICH SHIPOWNER.



MAX: DO YOU LIKE HIM? YOU CAN HAVE HIM. HE IS MY EMPLOYEE, AFTER ALL/
ANNETTE: HIS TATTOOS ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOURS. IT MIGHT BE A NICE CHANGE FOR ME. WE'LL SEE MY DEAR...

MAX: YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ME, MY DEAR. THAT WAS AN ORDER!

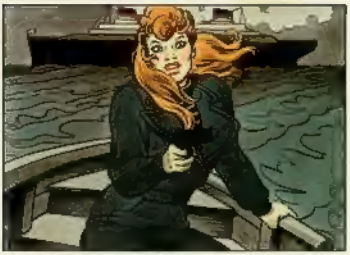
ANNETTE: DID YOU LIKE THAT, MAX?
MAX: A LITTLE TOO FAST AND HIS SKIN LOOKS TOO NAKED... WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CHANGE THAT, MY DEAR BOY!

SAILOR: TAKE IT EASY! IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE!
MAX: NO PROBLEM! I'M A PATRON OF THE ARTS!

MAX: VERY NICE!...THE TATTOO ARTIST DID AN EXCELLENT JOB OF EXECUTING MY DESIGN.

MAX: I WOULD LIKE TO TRY THIS IN A MORE UNUSUAL PLACE. WHAT ABOUT DOING IT IN A LIFEBOAT NEXT TIME?

SAILOR: IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN?
ANNETTE: AS IF WE WERE SHIPWRECKED?
MAX: THEY'LL BE ABLE TO FIND US. I PROMISE YOU. I HAVEN'T GONE COMPLETELY MAD!



ANNETTE: I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR DIRTY GAMES. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS!
MAX: ??!
SAILOR: ??!

ANNETTE: MAX, REMEMBER YOUR YEARS AT THE JESUIT COLLEGE! AND YOU, SAILOR, SURPRISE ME FOR ONCE!

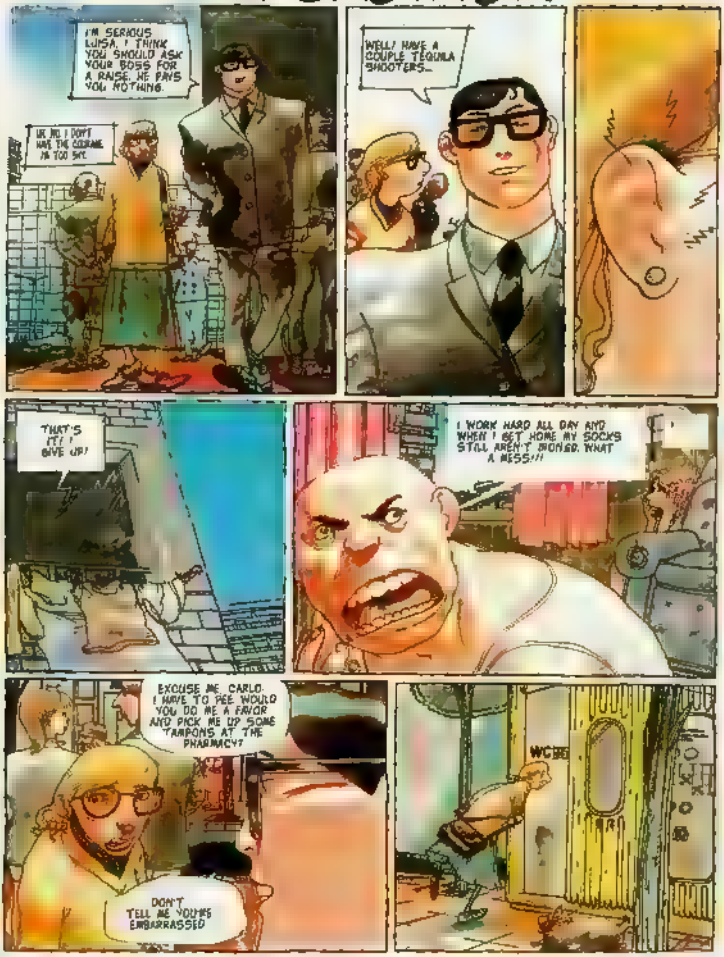
Of course the jury found me innocent. I looked so pale when they found me after six days of drifting on the ocean. Well, all that is left now are a few unpleasant memories.

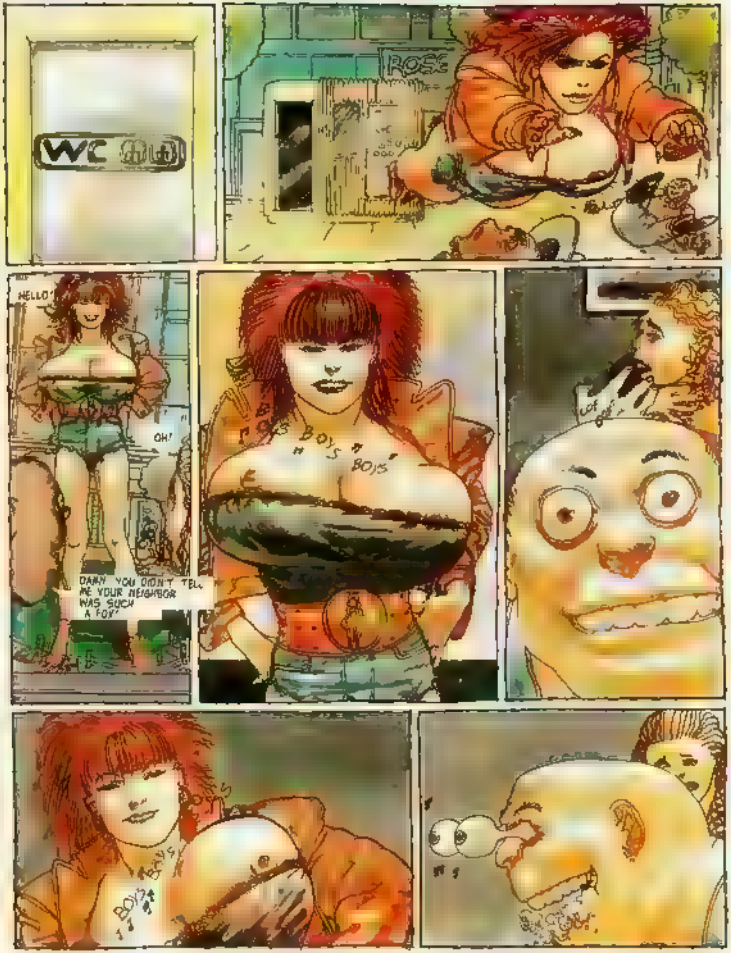
MATHILDE: MADAM, YOUR LAMPS WERE JUST DELIVERED.
ANNETTE: THANK YOU, MATHILDE. PLEASE PUT ONE ON EACH SIDE OF MY DESK.

ANNETTE: WHAT A LOVELY SOFT LIGHT... IT'S PERFECT FOR THE FIRST BOARD MEETING OF MY NEW COMPANY.

THE END

SUPERCHICK


I'M SERIOUS LUISA, I THINK YOU SHOULD ASK YOUR BOSS FOR A RAISE. HE PAYS YOU NOTHING.
UH, NO. I DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE. HE'S TOO SEXY.
WELL! HAVE A COUPLE TEQUILA SHOOTERS...
THAT'S IT! I GIVE UP!
I WORK HARD ALL DAY AND WHEN I GET HOME MY SOCKS STILL AREN'T IRONED. WHAT A MESS!!!
EXCUSE ME, CARLO. I HAVE TO PEE. WOULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR AND PICK ME UP SOME TAMPONS AT THE PHARMACY?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE EMBARRASSED
WC


WC
ROSE
HELLO!
OH!
DARN YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YOUR NEIGHBOR WAS SUCH A FOX!
BOYS
BOYS
BOYS

STOP SCOLDING HER
DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANYMORE YELLING IN THIS HOUSE
WAIT CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?
NO THANKS I'VE GOT TO FLY
IS IT A SPACE SHIP?
A HOT AIR BALLOON?
NO IT'S SUPERCHICK!
I'M BACK DID YOU GET THEM?
YES BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT SIZE SEE IF THEY FIT
PERFECT YOU'VE GOT THE MAKING OF A GREAT GYNECOLOBIST
STRANGE EVERYONE THEY SUPERCHICK APPEARS LOIS'A EXCUSES HERSELF AND SLIPS HOW COULD LOIS BE SUPERCHICK? NO IT COULDN'T BE SHE'S MUCH TOO FRUMPY!

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

NIGHT AND THE SEA

1

BLUE CLOUDS ARE WORSE THAN BLACK CLOUDS. THEY BRING SNOW.
WE'RE LOST.
IT'S BETTER TO DROWN THAN TO BE HANGED.
GOD WAS CHOSEN OUR FATE.
YES.
OUR CREW

LET'S CLEANSE OUR CONSCIENCE MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON OUR SOULS.
WE SHOULD HAVE DROWNED HIM N A WELL
AS IT IS, WE HARMED HIM ENOUGH
THE NIGHT WILL HIDE OUR SINS
THIS IS NARDOUANONNE'S GOURD...
YOU MEAN THE OUTCHMAN IN THE TOWER?
HE KNEW
OUR REPENTANCE WILL BE PRESERVED IN HIS GOURD

THE DEED IS DONE
SO BE IT
CRACK
SPLASH
IF THE BOY SURVIVES US MAY GOD HELP HIM. IF HE DIES. MAY HE FORGIVE US
IT'S TIME TO DIE...
TIME TO GO ON TO THE SPIRIT WORLD

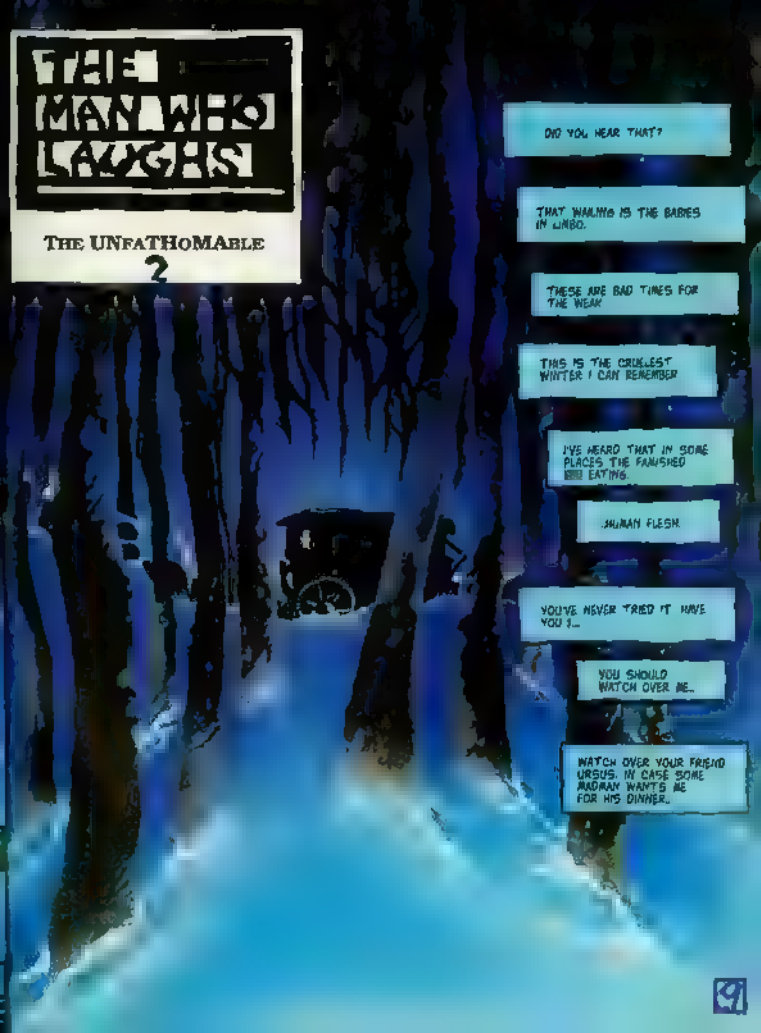
THE SEA
THE SEA HAS SWALLOWED THEM UP..
THE VILLAGE..! MUST FIND THE VILLAGE..

THUMB
SCREAM
GOD MY GOD

BUAAAA...
UH...MISS...
BUAA...BUUU...
BEUUUU
MISS?
BEUUUU...
THE PLAGUE..SHE'S GOT THE PLAGUE
BUAAAA..
BUAAA...BUAA

BUUU...BUUA...
GOOD GOD..
BUAAAAAA...BUUU!..
BUUU!?
HEY GWYNPLAINE LET YOUR FRIENDS, THE MANDRAKES TAKE CARE OF THE LITTLE ONE
WHO KNOWS MAYBE SHE HAS THE PLAGUE TOO? DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES
SHUT HER MOUTH THAT'LL STOP HER WAILING
KILL HER GWYNPLAINE KILL THE LITTLE BITCH
OR WE'LL EAT YOU

DON'T WORRY LITTLE ONE.
THE MANDRAKES DON'T EXIST.
IT'S COLD ILL KEEP YOU WARM WITH MY CLOAK
WE'LL FIND A VILLAGE YOU'LL SEE.
DID YOU HEAR THE SON OF A BITCH?
WE'RE REALLY SCREWED LYING UNDER THE GALLOWS. NO ONE COMES ROUND HERE.
END


THE MAN WHO LAUGHS
THE UNFATHOMABLE
2
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
THAT WAILING IS THE BABIES IN LIMBO.
THESE ARE BAD TIMES FOR THE WEAK
THIS IS THE COLDEST WINTER I CAN REMEMBER
I'VE HEARD THAT IN SOME PLACES THE FAMISHED [illegible] EATING
HUMAN FLESH
YOU'VE NEVER TRIED IT HAVE YOU ?...
YOU SHOULD WATCH OVER ME..
WATCH OVER YOUR FRIEND URSUS. IN CASE SOME MADMAN WANTS ME FOR HIS DINNER..

QUIET, ORO. DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
GRRRR
YES.
WHO IS IT?
I'M DYING OF EXHAUSTION.
WHAT TIME IS IT? YOU'RE INTERRUPTING MY DINNER.
I'M COLD—AND HUNGRY
WE CAN'T ALL BE COMFORTABLE.
COME IN! DON'T BE STUPID AND COME IN IF YOU'RE COLD.
SAID, "COME IN" YOU FOOL!
DOWN, ORO...
GRRRR

WHY ARE YOU HOLDING THOSE RAGS LIKE THAT? THEY'RE NOT GOLD!
HERE'S SOME DRY CLOTHES
GOOD YOU'RE NOT FROSTBITTEN.
MY NAME IS GWYN... GWYNPLAINE.
THE COLD HASN'T CRIPPLED YOU THIS TIME GWYNPLAINE!
MY GOD [illegible] AREN'T JUST [illegible] RAVENOUS!
YOU DON'T HAVE THE PLAGUE, DO YOU? IF YOU INFECT MY WOLF...
GRUMB GRUMB GRUMB
IT'S SICKENING TO SEE HOW PEOPLE EAT WHEN THEY'RE STARVING. AND IT'S A PLEASURE TO SEE A LORD EAT. I'VE SEEN DUKES EATING. NOW THAT'S DINING GRACEFULLY!
EAT EAT TILL YOU EXPLODE. NO DRINK THE MILK
...BUAAAA...
DAMN YOU! WHY ARE YOU SCREAMING NOW?
BELUU. BUUU..
GRUMB
BUUUAAA...
WHAT'S THAT?

DAMN IT! ANOTHER ONE!
BUAAAHHH..
THE SMELL OF FOOD IS MAKING IT HUNGRY .GIVE ME THE MILK
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'LL GET DINNER TONIGHT
ARE YOU ORPHANS?
SHE'S NOT MY SISTER.
WHO IS SHE?
I FOUND HER.
AND YOU RESCUED HER!
YES .NEAR THE COAST...
GLUB GLUB
SHE'S BEEN ABANDONED?
NO. HER MOTHER WAS DEAD THE DARKNESS KILLED HER.
WE DOWN NEXT TO HER. IF SHE CRIES GIVE HER THE REST OF THE MILK
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO LOOK FOR HER MOTHER AND TO BURY HER IF NECESSARY
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MANDRAKES?
MANDRAKES? YOU MUST HAVE FOUND HER NEAR WHERE JANSEN, "THE MADMAN" WAS HANGED
JANSEN "THE MADMAN"

HE WAS A POOR UNHAPPY HALF-CRAZED BOY HE USED TO GO ROUND THE TAVERNS RECITING POEMS FOR A FEW COINS
WHEN HE WAS DRUNK HE BECAME TERRIBLY SAD HE WOULD WEEP AND CRY...
ABOUT A YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAD DIED OF THE PLAGUE THEN ONE DAY HE ATTACKED A NOBLEMAN
AND KILLED HIM. THE NOBLEMAN HAD LAUGHED AT HIS MISFORTUNES..SO HE KILLED HIM.
BUT DON'T BE FRIGHTENED HE WAS HANGED A MONTH AGO HE'S GOOD AND DEAD BY NOW
HIS GHOST WON'T HAUNT YOU
...MUST BE SEEN HAS BOON DON'T WORRY AND LOOK ...ER THE LITTLE ONE
WE'LL BE BACK SOON

AH DAD, YOU CAN SEE BETTER WITH YOUR NOSE THAN DIOGENES WITH HIS LANTERN.
SHE'S DEAD... STONE DEAD
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN MAKE GOOD FOR THE DEATH OF THIS POOR WOMAN. MAYBE SHE HAD SOME VALUABLES
MY GOD! WHAT'S THIS? SPOTS! IT'S THE PLAGUE!!!
I MUST BURN... I MUST DAMNED PLAGUE!
THE TORCH!
FLASH!
QUIET QUIET DAD.
SURVIVAL TAKES COURAGE THE PLAGUE IS UNPREDICTABLE
JANSEN. POOR MADMAN.
DEATH HAS LEFT YOU WITH A SINISTER SMILE!
LET'S GET BACK TO THE OTHERS I MUST BANDAGE MY HAND
IT'S A GOOD THING I'M A HEALER...OTHERWISE...

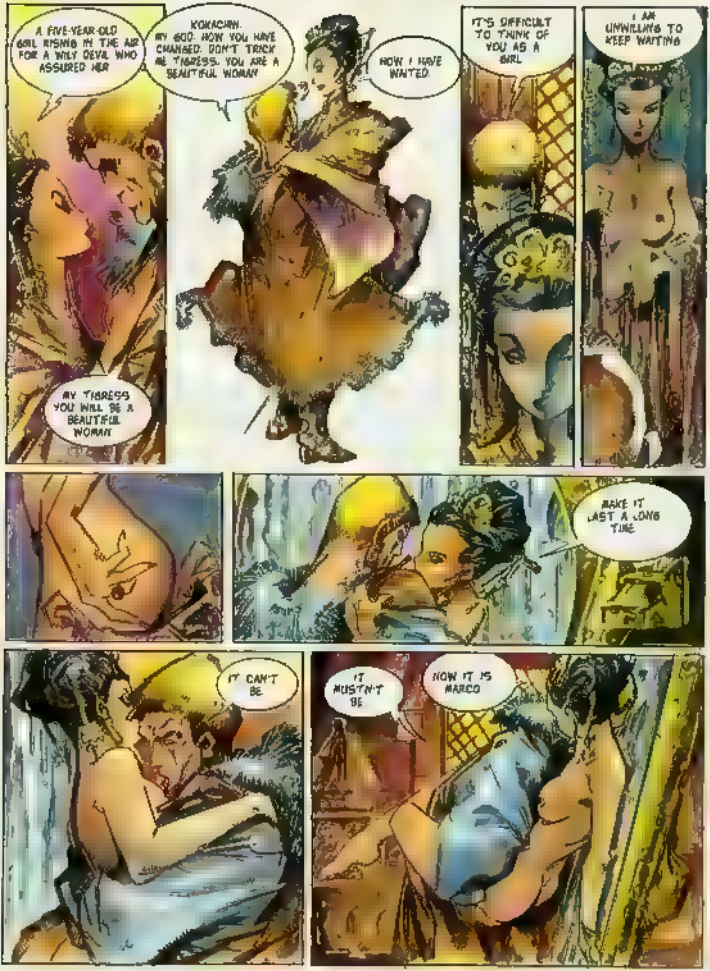
SHE WAS SO COLD ! CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN DIE WHEN YOU HAVE A BABY
WELL DAD .. BE THEIR FATHER AND YOU'LL BE THEIR UNCLE I'LL ADOPT THEM THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID
WOOF
WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?
I'M NOT LAUGHING..
THAT'S JUST MY MOUTH.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT LAUGHING?
NO . I'M NOT
BUT YOU SEEM
WH WHO DID THAT TO YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS..
FOREVER..

HERE..HERE IT IS.
"BUCCA FOSSA USQUE AD ALVARES. RENOVAS DESOLUDATIS. MASCULE MUDVDATO MASCA ERIS, ET RIDESIS SEMPER."
YES. THAT'S IT.. POOR THING.
LAUGH. LITTLE ONE. LAUGH...
POOR BABY...SHE'S AS LOVELY AS A GODDESS. BUT SHE HAS THE UGLIEST WET NURSE..EVEN IN THE MOONLIGHT HE'S AS UGLY AS SIN
WE'LL CALL YOU DEA. DEA THE..
BUT
SHE'S BLIND. THE COLD NIGHT HAS TAKEN HER MOTHER AND HER SIGHT
GOD!
END
CHAPTER 2

THE UNICORN'S REFLECTION

WE LEFT IT ALL BEHIND BY RETURNING TO VENICE WHERE LAND AND SEA BECOME A DREAM HORIZON
WE ALREADY HAVE EXCESS CARGO.
IT'S BY ORDER OF THE EMPEROR MARCO
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
AND EVIL
IT'S AN ENIGMA SHROUDED IN MIST'S OF THE MOST DISTANT PAST
IT'S BELIEVED NOT TO BE OF THIS WORLD BUT TO HAVE COME FROM THE HEAVENS.
LEGENDS!
IT IS SAID THAT IN IT THERE IS SOMETHING WHICH AWAKENS IN ONE VISIONS OF BLOOD AND REVEALS ONE MY MOST CONFUSED FOR DREAMS

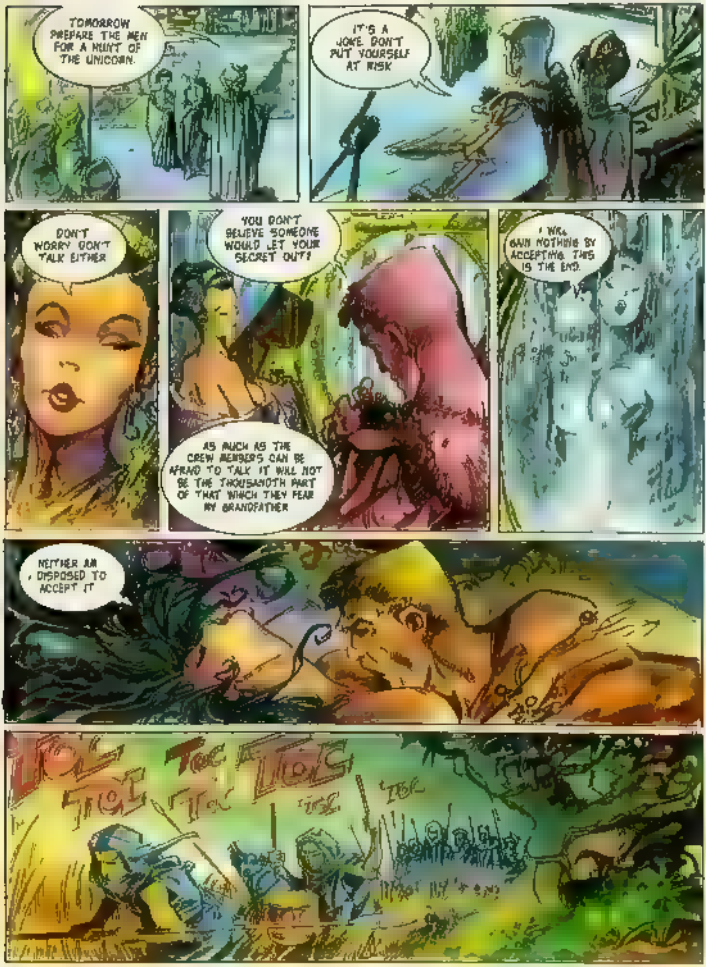
KUBLAI SENDS HIS GRANDDAUGHTER TO THE KHAN OF PERSIA MARCO POLO WILL BE HER CUSTODIAN DURING THIS LONG VOYAGE OF MORE THAN A YEAR
THE YEARS HAVE BROUGHT TRIBUTE. KARLING WOMEN ARE ORNAMENTS NOT AN OBSESSION
DO NOT SPEAK OF TRIBUTES UNTIL YOU SEE THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE PRINCESS
, FEAR THAT IN XANADU , WILL LONG FOR THE VENETIAN TURRETS AND IN SAN MARCOS , WILL SADLY MISS THE FLATLANDS OF KAMBALINK
BUT A VOYAGE IS ALWAYS A DOOR INTO THE UNKNOWN
MAY I COME IN HIGHNESS?
I HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR THIS VISIT FOR A LONG TIME.
THOSE WHO HAVE PRAISED YOUR BEAUTY HAVE FALLEN SHORT HIGHNESS
TRULY? YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME MARCO?
DURING THE YEARS THAT HAVE MADE ME A WOMAN REMEMBER A GIRL HOPING A MAN WOULD TAKE A FANCY TO HER
MEN ARE A DECEPTION INCLUDING THOSE WORTH THE TROUBLE STILL DON'T REMEMBER!


A FIVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL RISING IN THE AIR FOR A WILY DEVIL WHO ASSURED HER
MY TIGRESS YOU WILL BE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
KOKACHIN. MY GOD! HOW YOU HAVE CHANGED! DON'T TRICK ME TIGRESS. YOU ARE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
HOW I HAVE WANTED
IT'S DIFFICULT TO THINK OF YOU AS A GIRL
I AM UNWILLING TO KEEP WAITING
MAKE IT LAST A LONG TIME
IT CAN'T BE
IT MUSTN'T BE
NOW IT IS MARCO

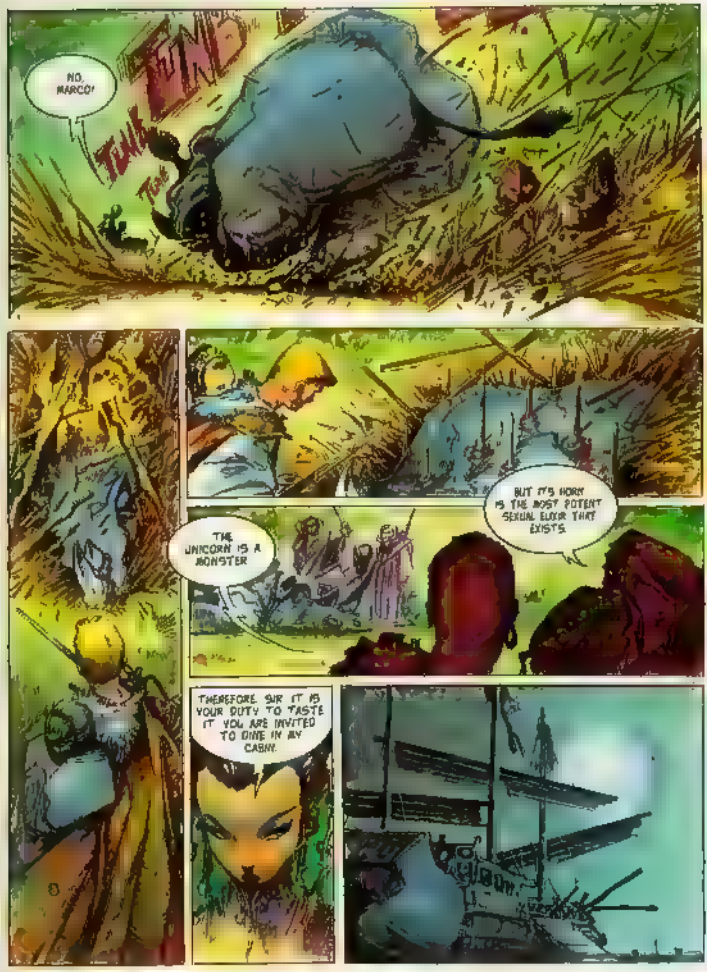
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU?
THE FIRST PLEASURE IS PAID FOR WITH PAIN AND BLOOD
YOU'RE A VIRGIN?
NOT ANYMORE
THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE NOW FACE WAITED A LONG TIME TO CATCH UP TO US. I WOULDN'T THINK OF ABANDONING A SINGLE ONE OF THESE DAYS HAVE BEEN DREAMING OF

CAPTAIN WE'VE SIGHTED LAND
UNFURL THE PERSIAN FLAG GIVE THE ORDER TO SET FOR SHORE
A MESSAGE FOR MARCO POLO.
MESSAGE FROM THE KHAN FOR YOU, SIR.
NASTY, WICKED DOG
THE KHAN HAS DECIDED THAT WE WILL MEET AT THE PORT OF GUJARET
YOUR FUTURE HUSBAND TAKES HOLD HE AWAITS US BELOW ORMUZ IN THE NORTH OF INDIA.
DAYS REMAIN UNTIL THEN

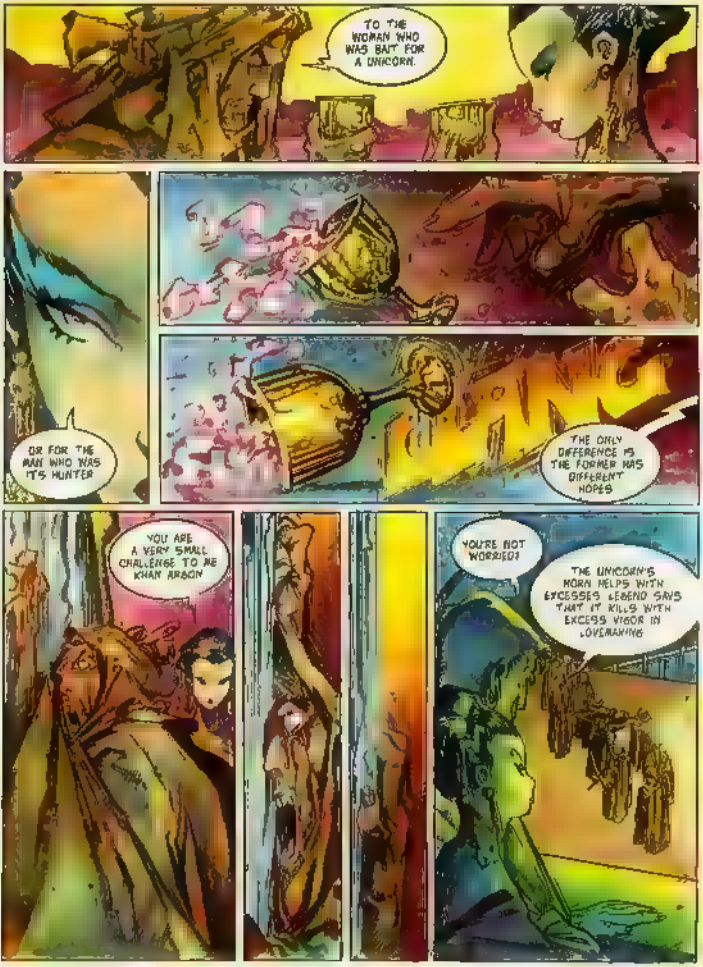
I SUPPOSE YOU'VE BROUGHT ME NEWS OF THE KUBLAI
A TREASURE CHEST OF ADVICE AND COUNSEL
AND MY WIFE?
SHE IS THE MOST ESTEEMED SERVANT OF KUBLAI KHAN
DURING THE VOYAGE HERE I HEARD THAT ONE CAN HUNT UNICORN
THEY EXIST?
YES. TO HUNT THEM ONE MUST BE A VIRGIN ONLY THIS MAKES THEM LEAVE THEIR HIDING PLACES
AN OLD WIVES TALE
YOU DON'T BELIEVE BUT WHERE IS ONE TO FIND A VIRGIN IN THE TIMES WE LIVE IN?
HERE YOU HAVE ONE SIR
HIGHNESS NEVER DARE TO THINK OF THAT ANIMAL
BUT TO ME THE POSSIBILITY OF SEEING SUCH A LEGENDARY ANIMAL IS FASCINATING


TOMORROW PREPARE THE MEN FOR A HUNT OF THE UNICORN.
IT'S A JOKE. DON'T PUT YOURSELF AT RISK
DON'T WORRY DON'T TALK EITHER
YOU DON'T BELIEVE SOMEONE WOULD LET YOUR SECRET OUT?
AS MUCH AS THE CREW MEMBERS CAN BE AFRAID TO TALK IT WILL NOT BE THE THOUSANDTH PART OF THAT WHICH THEY FEAR MY GRANDFATHER
I WILL GAIN NOTHING BY ACCEPTING. THIS IS THE END.
NEITHER AM I DISPOSED TO ACCEPT IT
TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC

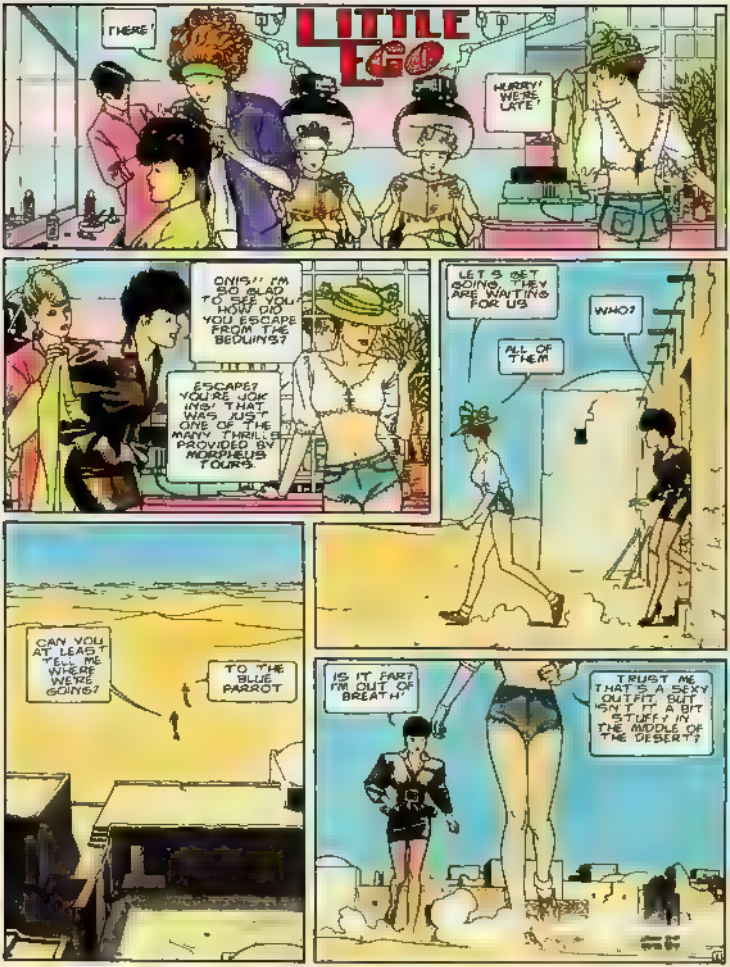
HIGHNESS THERE IS STILL TIME TO DESIST IN THIS MADNESS
NO ONE CAN DEFY THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF KUBLAI KHAN
TOC TOC
I AM SURELY NOT WOULD NOT DARE.
DON'T WORRY I WISH TO KNOW DON'T DARE TO ASK
BUT YOU'RE GAMBLING WITH YOUR LIFE
IT'S COMING! IT'S COMING!
QUIET DON'T MOVE!
WHAT IS THIS HORROR?


NO, MARCO!
THE END
TOO
THE UNICORN IS A MONSTER
BUT IT'S HORN IS THE MOST POTENT SEXUAL ELIXIR THAT EXISTS.
THEREFORE SIR IT IS YOUR DUTY TO TASTE IT YOU ARE INVITED TO DINE IN MY CABIN.

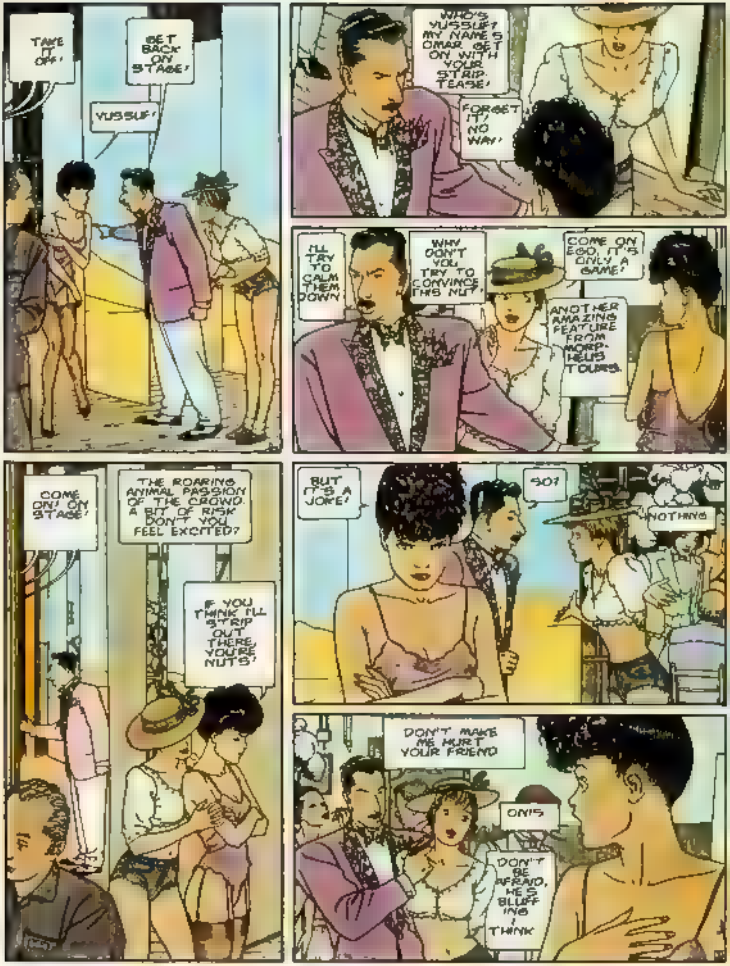
LEGENDS TRANSFORM HORROR INTO BEAUTY
WORSE TO CHANGE BEAUTY INTO HORROR
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID ? CAN ASSURE YOU YES
I AM PARALYZED
NOT , MARCO. BUT NOT THAT I WOULD WISH IT
THIS IS SOMETHING UNFORGET TABLE
AND NOW CAPTAIN ! REQUEST TO BE LEFT ALONE WITH MY HUSBAND
YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND HIGHNESS
YOU ARE NOT TAKING TOO MANY IN FORMALITIES?
HE IS A PERSONAL FRIEND OF THE EMPEROR OCCUPYING A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY FAMILY
WORTHY OF BEING A DESCENDANT OF GENGIS KHAN
I BELIEVE THAT MY ANCESTORS WOULD APPROVE OF MY ACTS
ARE YOU SURE HIGHNESS?

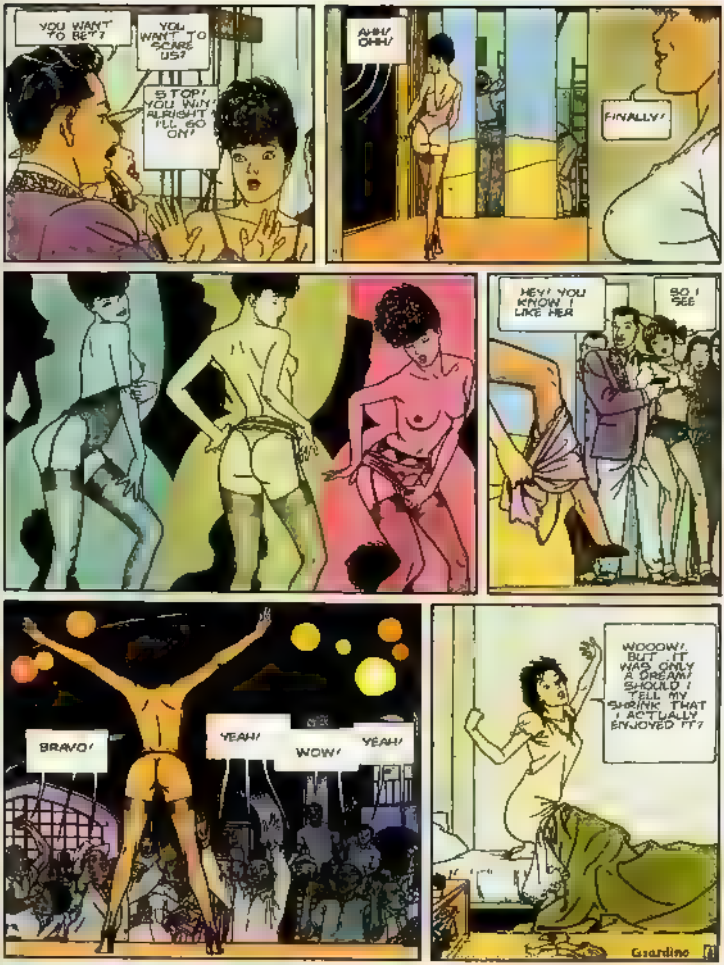

TO THE WOMAN WHO WAS BAIT FOR A UNICORN.
OR FOR THE MAN WHO WAS IT'S HUNTER
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THE FORMER WAS DIFFERENT HOPES
YOU ARE A VERY SMALL CHALLENGE TO ME KHAN ARGON
YOU'RE NOT WORRIED?
THE UNICORN'S HORN HELPS WITH EXCESSES «LEGEND SAYS THAT IT KILLS WITH EXCESS VIGOR IN LOVEMAKING

THEREFORE IT WAS NO ACCIDENT
HE WAS AN ACCIDENT
LEAVING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A VEHEMENT DESIRE. THE VOYAGE HAS BEEN LIFE AND NOW I FEAR THAT MY ARRIVAL WILL BE A GOOD-BYE


LITTLE EGO
THERE!
HURRY! WE'RE LATE!
ONIS!! I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU! HOW DID YOU ESCAPE FROM THE BEDUINS?
ESCAPE? YOU'RE JOKING! THAT WAS JUST ONE OF THE MANY THRILLS PROVIDED BY MORPHEUS TOURS.
LET'S GET GOING! THEY ARE WAITING FOR US
WHO?
ALL OF THEM
CAN YOU AT LEAST TELL ME WHERE WE'RE GOING?
TO THE BLUE PARROT
IS IT FAR? I'M OUT OF BREATH!
TRUST ME. THAT'S A SEXY OUTFIT, BUT ISN'T IT A BIT STUFFY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT?

LOOK AT THIS!
I HAD NOT NOTICED!
I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER
PUTTING IT ON
STILL, I MUST HAVE
FOR SOME REASON, BUT WHICH ONE?
¥700
¥000?
STRIP!
¥000
STRIP! TAKE IT OFF
¥800
STRIP!


TAKE IT OFF!
GET BACK ON STAGE!
YUSSUF!
WHO'S YUSSUF? MY NAME'S OMAR. GET ON WITH YOUR STRIP TEASE!
FORGET IT! NO WAY!
I'LL TRY TO CALM THEM DOWN
WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO CONVINCE THIS NUT
COME ON EGO, IT'S ONLY A GAME!
ANOTHER AMAZING FEATURE FROM MORPHEUS TOURS.
COME ON! ON STAGE!
THE ROARING ANIMAL PASSION OF THE CROWD. A BIT OF RISK DON'T YOU FEEL EXCITED?
IF YOU THINK I'LL STRIP OUT THERE, YOU'RE NUTS!
BUT IT'S A JOKE!
SO?
NOTHING
DON'T MAKE ME HURT YOUR FRIEND
ONIS
DON'T BE AFRAID, HE'S BLUFFING I THINK


YOU WANT TO BET?
YOU WANT TO SCARE US?
STOP! YOU WIN! ALRIGHT! I'LL GO ON!
AHH! OHH!
FINALLY!
HEY! YOU KNOW I LIKE HER
SO I SEE
BRAVO!
YEAH!
WOW!
YEAH!
WOOOW! BUT IT WAS ONLY A DREAM! SHOULD I TELL MY SHRINK THAT I ACTUALLY ENJOYED IT?
Casarino

PRIVADO: BELOW ZERO

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MY WIFE MURDERED!? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?
DON'T SCREW WITH ME PAL...WE'VE GOT A MOUNTAIN OF EVIDENCE AGAINST YOU
"THAT'S A LIE!! I'M INNOCENT! I'M INNOCENT!"
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT TO AN ATTORNEY TO A TELEPHONE CALL ANYTHING YOU SAY..
CAN BE HELD AGAINST YOU IN A COURT OF LAW
WHAT HAVE I DONE!? WHAT'S A MOUNTAIN OF EVIDENCE?
"WHAT EVIDENCE!? YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE BIT!! NOT ONE!! NOT ONE!!"
THEY'RE BLUFFING. I KNOW THAT I DIDN'T MAKE ONE MISTAKE
NOT ONE MISTAKE, SINCE IT ALL BEGAN, FIVE DAYS AGO
I'M AFRAID, JOHNNY
NO, NO ! I'VE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING
BUT IT'S MURDER.
IT'S HER LIFE OR OURS! LISA IS CATHOLIC SHE WON'T HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT DIVORCE BESIDES
SHE WOULD GET EVERYTHING THE APARTMENT THE HOUSE IN LAKE PLACID, MY OFFICE IN MANHATTAN

AND SHE'S NEVER STOP HARASSING US I KNOW HER TOO WELL
WHAT IF THE POUCE FIND OUT?
DON'T FORGET THAT I'M A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR THAT I'VE STUDIED CRIMINOLOGY I KNOW HOW TO MAKE TRACKS AND HOW TO ERASE THEM I'VE PLANNED
THE PERFECT CRIME
BELIEVE IN YOU JOHNNY
IN A FEW DAYS IT WILL ALL BE OVER
THE COLD WAS BRUTAL IN THE STREET AND ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER REPORT'S THE COLD WOULD CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME
COULDN'T HELP SAYING THE COLD WOULD BE AN ACCOMPLICE IN THE CRIME THE POLICE COULD INTERROGATE ME AS MUCH AS THEY WANTED
TWO DAYS BEFORE I HAD RENTED A CAR WHILE MINE WAS IN THE SHOP
YES MERI MR LYOTTA
BUT I HAD ANOTHER REASON WITH A RENTED CAR I'D HAVE RECORDED PROOF OF THE MILEAGE
YOU'RE SO LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO GO TO FLORIDA MR LYOTTA !

OF MY NAME THE DAY OF THE EXACT TIME
BUT IT'S SO FAIR TO TAKE A PLANE
VERY GOOD BLONDIE REMEMBER WELL WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU NOW
I NEVER FLY I'D LIKE TO IT'S NOT FEAR BUT PANIC
WHAT'S MORE LOVE DRIVING
HOPE YOU ENJOY THE TRIP MR WOTTA!
ONE HOUR LATER HANGED THE CAR OVER TO A PROFESSIONAL DRIVER
HERE'S THE MONEY AND THE RENTAL PAPERS TAKE TWO DAYS TO GET TO GAINESVILLE
ONCE YOU GET THERE LEAVE THE CAR IN A PARKING LOT AND GIVE THE KEYS TO THE ATTENDANT. THEN CALL THIS NUMBER IN MANHATTAN...
TO TELL ME WHERE THE CAR IS AND WHAT HAPPENED ON THE TRIP AT THE LOCAL AIRPORT NOMAD AIRLINES HAS A RETURN TICKET IN YOUR NAME
GOT IT
ALL THIS TOOK TWO DAYS TWO DAYS DURING WHICH MY WIFE THOUGHT I WASN'T IN NEW YORK BUT ON A TRIP IN GAINESVILLE TRACKING DOWN LEADS IN A CASE TWO DAYS WHICH PASSED IN SECRECY

BEFORE GETTING THE CALL FROM THE DRIVER I WAITED UNTIL KEATON THE DOORMAN GOT OUT OF THE WAY SO I COULD GET PAST HIM WITHOUT SEEING ME

OPENING THE DOOR TO THE APARTMENT WITHOUT MAKING A SOUND I COULD HEAR THE TV IN THE LIVING ROOM

INSIDE THE HEAT WAS TURNED UP WAY TOO HIGH JUST HOW SHE LIKED IT

THE FIREPLACE WAS FAKE WITH PLASTIC LOGS AND ELECTRIC FLAMES BUT THE POWER WAS REAL

CRACH!

THERE.. IT'S DONE.

I PROCEEDED TO TURN OVER THE DRAWERS AND CLOSETS FAKING A ROBBERY

SHUT OFF THE HEAT DISCREETLY OPENED SOME WINDOWS HOOKED UP THE AIR CONDITIONER AND TURNED IT UP TO THE MAX

AFTER A LITTLE WHILE THE APARTMENT TURNED ITSELF INTO A WORKING ICEBOX

I LEFT THE BUILDING WITHOUT BEING SEEN BY ANYONE OF THAT I'M SURE

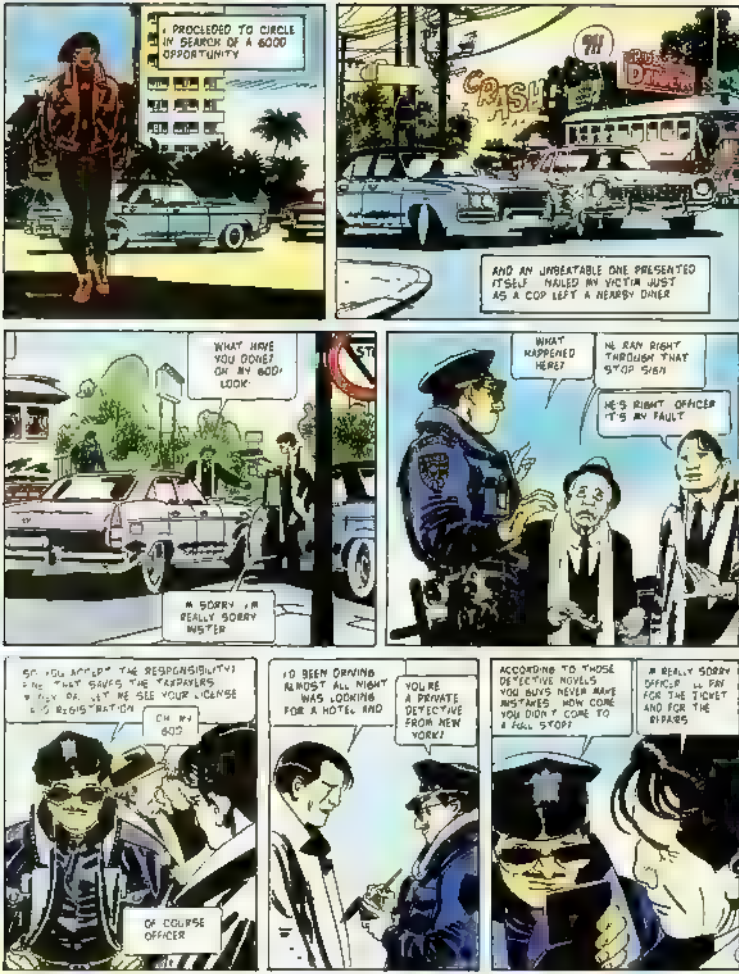
TAXI!

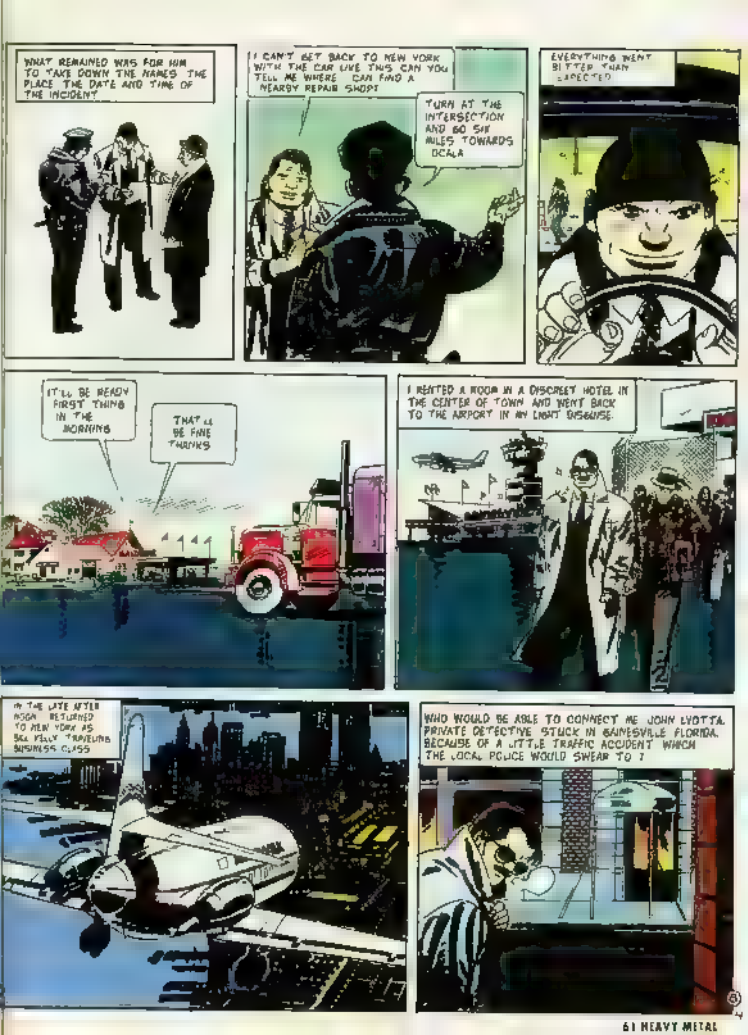
WITH A MINIMAL DISGUISE AND AN ALIAS, I TOOK A NIGHT FLIGHT TO NORTH CAROLINA.

WAITING FOR ME THERE WAS A PRE-ARRANGED FLIGHT TO FLORIDA

HERE'S YOUR BOARDING PASS MR CHRISTEL

I GOT TO GAINESVILLE IN THE EARLY MORNING I FOUND THE CAR WHERE HE SAID I'D BE


I PROCEEDED TO CIRCLE IN SEARCH OF A GOOD OPPORTUNITY
CRASH
AND AN UNBEATABLE ONE PRESENTED ITSELF NAILED MY VICTIM JUST AS A COP LEFT A NEARBY DINER
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? OH MY GOD! LOOK.
I'M SORRY, I'M REALLY SORRY MISTER
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
HE RAN RIGHT THROUGH THAT STOP SIGN
HE'S RIGHT OFFICER IT'S MY FAULT
SO YOU ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT SAVES THE TAXPAYERS MONEY OK. LET ME SEE YOUR LICENSE AND REGISTRATION
OH MY GOD
OF COURSE OFFICER
I'D BEEN DRIVING ALMOST ALL NIGHT I WAS LOOKING FOR A HOTEL AND
YOU'RE A PRIVATE DETECTIVE FROM NEW YORK!
ACCORDING TO THOSE DETECTIVE NOVELS YOU GUYS NEVER MAKE MISTAKES HOW COME YOU DIDN'T COME TO A FULL STOP?
I'M REALLY SORRY OFFICER I'LL PAY FOR THE TICKET AND FOR THE DAMAGES


WHAT REMAINED WAS FOR HIM TO TAKE DOWN THE NAMES THE PLACE THE DATE AND TIME OF THE INCIDENT
I CAN'T GET BACK TO NEW YORK WITH THE CAR LIKE THIS CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE CAN FIND A NEARBY REPAIR SHOP?
TURN AT THE INTERSECTION AND GO SIX MILES TOWARDS OCALA
EVERYTHING WENT BETTER THAN EXPECTED
IT'LL BE READY FIRST THING IN THE MORNING
THAT'LL BE FINE THANKS
I RENTED A ROOM IN A DISCREET HOTEL IN THE CENTER OF TOWN AND WENT BACK TO THE AIRPORT IN MY LIGHT DISGUISE
IN THE LATE AFTER NOON I RETURNED TO NEW YORK AS SO I FLEW TRAVELING BUSINESS CLASS
WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO CONNECT ME JOHN LYOTTA PRIVATE DETECTIVE STUCK IN GAINESVILLE FLORIDA BECAUSE OF A LITTLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT WHICH THE LOCAL POLICE WOULD SWEAR TO ?

AGAIN IN THE APARTMENT, I CLOSED THE WINDOWS, SHUT OFF THE AIR-CONDITIONING, AS SET THE HEAT HOW LINDA LOVED IT.
THE FORENSIC ANALYSIS DONE ON THE BODY WOULD ACCIDENTALLY MISCALCULATE THE TIME OF DEATH DUE TO THE APPARENT HEAT IN THE ROOM.
NOT KNOWING THE COLD SHE WAS BEEN IN, THE CORONER WOULD PLACE THE TIME OF DEATH AT THE PRECISE TIME OF MY ACCIDENT IN GAINESVILLE
THERE IT'S DONE.
YOU
DURING THE NIGHT, I REPEATED THE TRIP TO FLORIDA. I ARRIVED IN TIME TO SLEEP A COUPLE OF HOURS IN MY HOTEL.
SPACE CENTE
NASA TOUR
NO. NO, I DIDN'T MAKE ONE MISTAKE! NOT ONE! I'M SURE OF IT AND WITHOUT CAUSE I'VE BEEN ARRESTED
THE POLICE CAN'T HAVE ONE BIT OF EVIDENCE AGAINST ME! NOTHING!
YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE. I WASN'T EVEN IN NEW YORK. CAN PROVE IT. I'M INNOCENT!
CUT THE CRAP, LYOTTA

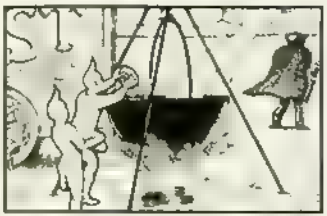
PAULA RUSSO. YOUR LOVER HAS ALREADY BEEN ARRESTED AND SHE'S TALKED. WE'VE GOT SO MUCH EVIDENCE ON YOU THAT WE DON'T EVEN NEED YOUR CONFESSION.
THAT'S A LIE. YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING!
NOT SHOW HIM THE PHOTOS. LOL. SEE WHAT HE SAYS
I BELIEVED I WAS DYING. THERE WERE ALL OF MY MOVES OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS PHOTOGRAPHED STEP BY STEP EVERYTHING! HOW WAS THIS POSSIBLE
WE'VE RECORDED YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH RUSSO. WHAT MORE?
H-H-HOW? HOW DID ?
DO YOU KNOW THE NAME GARY HARWOOD? NOT HE DOES THE SAME WORK AS YOU
HE'S A PRIVATE DETECTIVE
HE'S BEEN TRACKING YOU FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS.
B-BUT WHY? WHY?
WHY? YOU HAD A LOVER AND YOUR WIFE SUSPECTED SO
SHE HIRED HIM
THE END

STRIPTEASE
WAYNDY
THE NEW YORK CITY SNOWMAN
EAT MY YELLOW SNOW!
IT WAS A VERY BAD DAY
-HEY!
PUT THAT AWAY!
FIRST, A DRUNKEN BUM TOOK HIS HAT...
HEY! HEY!!
THEN SOME MOCKINGBIRDS STOLE HIS ARM
THIS WILL MAKE A GREAT NEST!
HEY KID, MY FROSTY ASS!
THEN A CAR FULL OF DRUG ADDICTS DROVE THROUGH HIS TORSO!
EAT MY YELLOW SNOW!
AND HIS HEAD LANDED IN A CABBAGE PATCH.
-HEY! GET AWAY FROM MY NOSE! BEAT IT!
UNFORTUNATELY IT WAS OWNED BY INTERNATIONAL SOCCER STAR PELE'
EAT MY YELLOW SNOOOOOOOOW.
HOURS LATER, ON A BEACH OFF THE COAST OF MARTINIQUE...
MANGEZ MA NEIGE JAUNE!

WEIRD WALLY
DUDE! WOW!! COOL!
SUPER WEINERS!! HOW ARE THE PHONE LINES DOING LATELY?
JUST SUPER DUPER BIG WE'VE ALREADY GOT CALLS FOR 479,952 ORDERS IN THE LAST 30 SECONDS
OVERNITE PACKAGE 4 WEIRD WALLY!
BE GORRAN THAT BE WE SUPER WEINERS!
GOOD GOD! DA SHEER BEAUTY OF'T LOOKIT DESC I I WIN HARDLY KEEP MYSELF FROM WIFF PAN
CRUNCH CRUNCH
AH SO... IN RUMORED HEADBUTT'S MICROWAVE VE... ULTIMATE WEAPON
COUNT 2 SECONDS ON HIM
KA-PLUMP!
YIKES!
JESUS!
OH OHNNN NOOOOOO! H-HEADBUTT WILL KILL ME IF HE RUNNED HIS MICROWAVE I I BEST GET THEE OUT OF THESE ACURSED SUPER WEINERS
YO! WEIRD WALLY I YAM HOME!
GULP! I HOPE HEADBUTT DIDN'T NOTICE HOW I DEPARED HIS MICROWAVE OVEN WITH THIS DUCT TAPE
YAM HOME HEN HEADBUTT
YO CHECK ME OUT, WEIRD WALLY SOME DUDEY JERK TOSSED OUT THESE FRESH SUPER WEINERS IN OUR TRASH CAN! THIS IS MY LUCKY DAY HOMIES!!
ARAMA
the End of AN EVIL ADVENTURE!

BISON BILL'S WEIRD WEST SHOW

BY MACK WHITE



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EQUOD
HEY, DOODLY, LISTEN 'HEARS A STORY BOUT ONE O' DEM BOMB UN T' ROBOTS GOIN' MAD AT THE PLAZAPLEX
SOUNDS JUS' LIKE THAT PIECE OF CRAP OF YOURS!
WHAT!? I FIXED HIM.
WELL I WANTED A CANDY BAR BUT THE CULTIES IN TH' BACK!
OH NO I GOT THE B HEAD ON BACKWARDS FER TO MEET HE
HAS HE GOT NUCLEAR PILES?
WELL.. HE STILL WORKS IT'S STILL JUS CANDY
I DON' KNO YOU SHOULD REDO IT.
I'M NOT SPENDING HOURS RETOUCHING IT JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE A WASTE FETISH
IT'S NOT A FETISH IT'S CAUTIOUSNESS SIMPLE CAUTIOUSNESS
"I COULD BE AFFECTED"
NEUROTIC!
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH IT EAT IT!
HMMM NOT BAD TANGY
UHH I JUST WANTED THE PAPER
YEAH? ME TOO
WHAT'S THIS WORLD COMING TO
MOEBIUS

Inflation LAND
IF I GO HOME TO GET 4 MILLION MORE, WHAT WILL THE PRICE BE BY THE TIME I GET BACK
TWENTY MILLION
OKAY M BACK! ONE MILLION DOLLARS! NOW IN HERE A PACK OF WEENERS!
SORRY HAT WAS THIS MORNING!
THE PRICE IS 5 MILLION DOLLARS NOW
BUT ONLY HAVE 12 MIL ON GIVE ME A BREAK
DO YOU RENT JUST WENT UP TO $5 MILL ON A WEEK
LOOK, FRIEND, THIS IS RIDICULOUS! WE'RE ALL STABBING EACH OTHER IN THE BACK AND OR WHAT??? SO THE NORMAL FIVE BUCK CLASS IS COME ON! BUT NO SQUARE, LET ME NOW A LITTLE OF THAT UNDERGROUND ECONOMY!
OKAY TELL YA WHAT YOU LET ME SUCK ON HER WIFE AND I GIVE YOU A WHOLE HAM!
DEAL!
HEY WAITAMINIT ME DIDN'T TELL ME HE WAS A HOMO!
I COULDA SWORE HE SAID HAM!
SLUG BUCKET
MY OWN DESIGN! THE FIRST EVER SPONGE OUTFIT!
A TEENIE BIT OF WATER AND...
LET ME BE YOUR SEXY LOVE WIPER!

EMPTY SKULL COMICS
DOC CHRISTIAN
MAYBE
HEY SKEETER!
BOOM!

Dr. Armando McGillicudy.
BRAIN SURGEON!
Join Dr McGillicudy as he prepares for his first actual live brain operation!
Get ready Miss Krause—it's hot to trot!!
First we gently remove the top of the skull.
Next we carefully cauterize all wounds
SCORCH!
Ha-ha! What a great job—I didn't forget ANYTHING!
But Doctor Ucumay we apply anesthesia BEFORE we begin the operation!
Damn! Must you people nitpick and harass me? I can't take this kind of pressure
Dr McGillicudy begins work briefly
Keep your brain MUTATING!!!
And it dates it to a lovely but winged Venusian Fly Trap
Enter Nurse Mongegarde informs the family
The bad news is your son is dead due to Dr McGillicudy working during the operation
But the good news is that in taking into the but winged Venusian Fly Trap is a much shorter procedure than a full term operation so my billable work will be MUCH LESS!
I just HATE it when this happens
The End

SUPERHEROES OF THE PAST
with THE PROFESSOR and JOHNNY
MYSTERIOUS
PROFESSOR GASTROPOD THE HUMAN SNAIL

a KILLER like YOU and ME

SERIOUSLY PAL, ALL BY MYSELF I'VE KNOCKED OFF AT THE VERY LEAST A HALF DOZEN PEOPLE
LOOK WHEN I CAME WITH NOTHING TO THE BIG APPLE ONE OF THE FIRST JOBS THAT HAD
WAS AS A SANITATION DEPARTMENT WORKER WHAT THE HELL A GARBAGE MAN
WHAT HAPPENED WAS ONE NIGHT TWO MONTHS AFTER I STARTED THE JOB, THOSE FUCKING DUMPSTERS ALREADY
WEIGHED ENOUGH
RUMBLE
CRUNCH
WHUMP
CRUNCH

BUT WHEN I SAW WHAT HAD MADE THIS ONE SO HEAVY IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE
WHAT THE HELL!
AND THAT OLD DRUNK WAS EASILY CRUSHED INTO BITS
MY NEXT JOB WASN'T SO BAD
I WAS REPAIRING TELEVISIONS
I COULD USE A HAND LADY!

A LITTLE MORE TO THE RIGHT LADY!
STILL A LITTLE BIT MORE!!!
BUT IT DIDN'T LAST LONG IT HAPPENED AGAIN.
ONLY A LITTLE MORE!
THERE WE GO.

AFTER THAT, I LEARNED THE ART OF MASONRY ..IN OTHER WORDS, I BECAME A BRICKLAYER
PHIL! PHIL!

WHERE THE DEVIL IS HE?

I CAN'T FIND PHIL ANYWHERE I'M PUTTING YOU IN CHARGE OF FILLING THE HOLES
THIS WAS THE THIRD TIME, AND THE TRUTH IS THAT I HAD ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA SWEAR

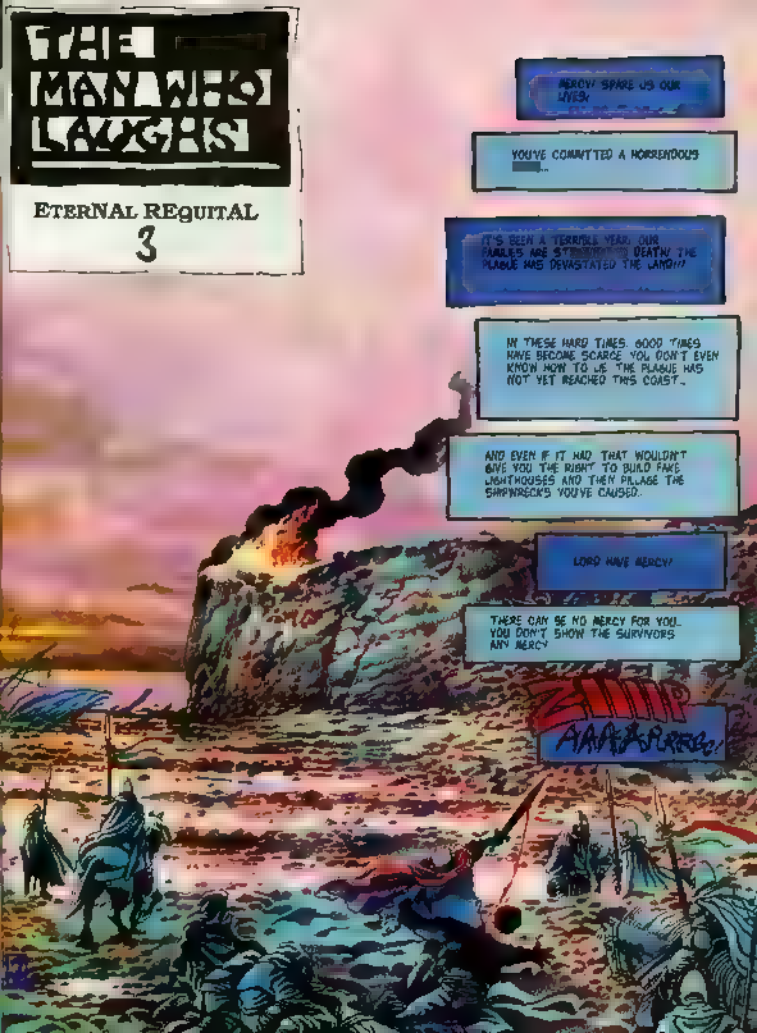
HE.LLLLPPPP!
HOLY

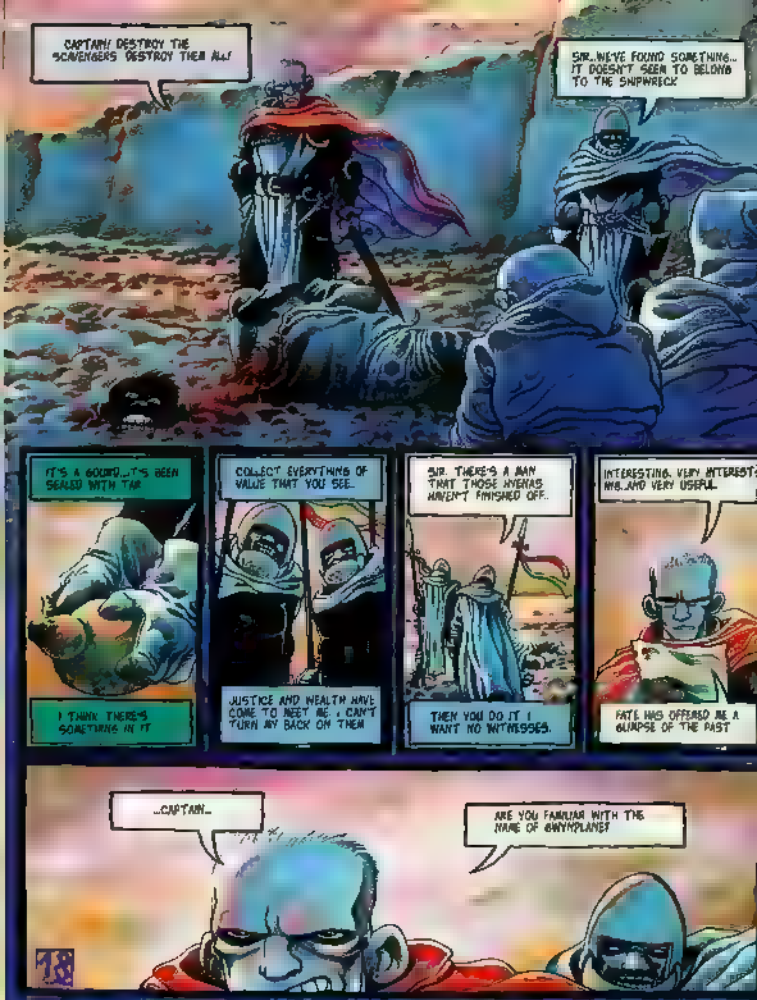
PHIL...PHIL!

AND THE LAST JOB I HAD BEFORE BECOMING A TAXI DRIVER WAS WORKING IN THE SUBWAY
STARTED OUT SELLING TICKETS BUT I WORKED MY WAY UP TO CONDUCTOR
OOF

I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING SIR. I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT THIS TIME WAS BEGINNING TO ENJOY IT. IN FACT
I SWORE I DID.
FORTY SECOND AND SEVENTH. TEN-FIFTY MISTER
YEAH. IT WAS SO HORRIBLE TO ACCEPT WHAT WAS HAPPENING. BUT YET IT WAS SO EASY.
WHEN YOU GET USED TO IT KILLING ISN'T ANYTHING OUT OF THIS WORLD I'M TELLING YOU.
TO ACTUALLY KNOCK PEOPLE OFF AND I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING ELSE PAL.

I SENT FOUR OF THEM TO THEIR BRAVES THAT I KNOW OF. MAYBE THERE ARE MORE OUT THERE THAT DON'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT
SURE. YES OF COURSE GOOD-BYE MY FRIEND..
THE END


THE MAN WHO LAUGHS
ETERNAL REQUITAL
3
MERCY! SPARE US OUR LIVES!
YOU'VE COMMITTED A HORRENDOUS [redacted]...
IT'S BEEN A TERRIBLE YEAR. OUR FAMILIES ARE STRICKEN BY DEATH! THE PLAGUE HAS DEVASTATED THE LAND!!!
IN THESE HARD TIMES, GOOD TIMES HAVE BECOME SCARCE. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO LIE. THE PLAGUE HAS NOT YET REACHED THIS COAST...
AND EVEN IF IT HAD, THAT WOULDN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BUILD FAKE LIGHTHOUSES AND THEN PILLAGE THE SHIPWRECKS YOU'VE CAUSED.
LORD HAVE MERCY!
THERE CAN BE NO MERCY FOR YOU... YOU DON'T SHOW THE SURVIVORS ANY MERCY
ZUUP
AAAARRRG!


CAPTAIN! DESTROY THE SCAVENGERS DESTROY THEM ALL!
SIR..WE'VE FOUND SOMETHING.. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BELONG TO THE SHIPWRECK
IT'S A GOURD...IT'S BEEN SEALED WITH TAR
I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT
COLLECT EVERYTHING OF VALUE THAT YOU SEE..
JUSTICE AND WEALTH HAVE COME TO MEET ME . CAN'T TURN MY BACK ON THEM
SIR. THERE'S A MAN THAT THOSE HYENAS HAVEN'T FINISHED OFF..
THEN YOU DO IT I WANT NO WITNESSES.
INTERESTING. VERY INTERESTING..AND VERY USEFUL.
FATE HAS OFFERED ME A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST
..CAPTAIN..
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE NAME OF @WYMPLANE?
18

OWYNPLANET OF COURSE
HE IS KNOWN AS "THE MAN WHO LAUGHS"
ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO HE WAS ADOPTED BY URSUS, AN ACTOR WHO TRAVELS WITH A PET WOLF
THERE'S ALSO A BLIND GIRL DEA IT'S A WRETCHED FAMILY
HEARD THEY WERE PERFORMING IN THE TAVERNS OF FOURQUIER
IS YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE THEY ARE?
THEY'RE PUTTING ON A PLAY THAT URSUS HIMSELF WROTE..
APPARENTLY IT'S PRETTY GOOD
NOT MUCH OF AN AUDIENCE TONIGHT THEY MUST ALL BE OUT LOOKING FOR THE BOY WHO KILLED HIS SISTER
DRINK SEEMS TO BE MORE POPULAR THAN THE THEATER
GO BACK TO THE CART WITH DEA HAVE TO TALK TO THE INNKEEPER ABOUT THE DEBT
BE CAREFUL OMO AND I WILL MEET YOU LATER
WHATEVER YOU SAY FATHER

YOU'RE SHIVERING, DEA
NO NO THANKS GAIN
ARE YOU SCARED?
IT'S THOSE THINGS I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE MURDERER
VOICES...
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ME.
IT'S NOT FAIR IT'S TO HAVE AS MANY AS I DO
IT HAS TO BE PART OF YOU...
I HATE FOR BLANK BLANK.
DON'T WORRY DEA...I'D NEVER LET ANYTHING HARM YOU.
I STILL HEAR THE VOICES..
NO, NO THEY ARE NOT LOOKING FOR ME.

THEN NEVER BE FRIENDS...I COULD STRIKE THEM WITH LIGHTNING, ZAP! ...NO, THEY'RE NOT LOOKING FOR ME...
NOT LOOKING...
YOU'RE SO GOOD TO ME, GWYN.
DON'T SAY THAT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HORRIBLE I'M
AND SHE...
HER EYES...HER EYES REMIND ME...
YOU WERE BORN FOR ME GWYN KNOW YOU'RE HANDSOME
REMIND ME OF MY MOTHER...MY MOTHER...
AND HER HAIR
I REMEMBER MY MOTHER SHE WAS SO COLD.
BUT YOU.
LITTLE BY LITTLE I REALIZED WHAT MY MOTHER WAS LIKE...
WHAT SHE IS LIKE...
FATE BLINDED YOU, DEA.
NOBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO LOVE YOU.
NOBODY DEA.
MY OWN BODY IS FILLED WITH HER TERRIFYING BLOOD.
WHEN I SHIT BLOOD, IT'S AS IF I'D SHIT...
LOVE DOES NOT NEED EYESIGHT
SIGHT CAN HIDE THE TRUTH
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WITH YOU AND SO I SHALL REMAIN FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE.
...AND REJECTING HER WITH DISGUST?
SHOULD I KILL THEM?
THEY SEEM SO FRAGILE...
MY HANDS HURT.

GWYN!!
DEA!!
MY GOD!!
AHHHHHH!!
YOU CAME SO CLOSE TO DEATH!!
OMO FOUND HIM. HE'D THE MAN THEY WERE LOOKING FOR
HE MUST HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE SOON AFTER WE GOT BACK
NEITHER OMO OR I SAW HIM LAST NIGHT
WHAT A GRUESOME RITUAL. HE CUT HIS WRISTS AND THEN BURIED THEM.
WE'D BETTER GET RID OF THE BODY. THE JAW ALWAYS NEEDS A CULPRIT
THAT'S ITS ONLY WEAKNESS
WE'LL GO SHOPPING IN TOWN THAT WAY WE WON'T RAISE ANY SUSPICIONS
OMO WILL TAKE CARE OF DEA
SOON YOU'LL BE WEALTHY YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MARRY DEA AND HAVE FOUR OR FIVE PUPS.
YOU'RE FAMOUS AROUND HERE
GOOD MORNING THE MAN WHO LAUGHS
HOPE THEY'RE BETTER LOOKING THAN YOU AND LUCKIER THAN DEA.

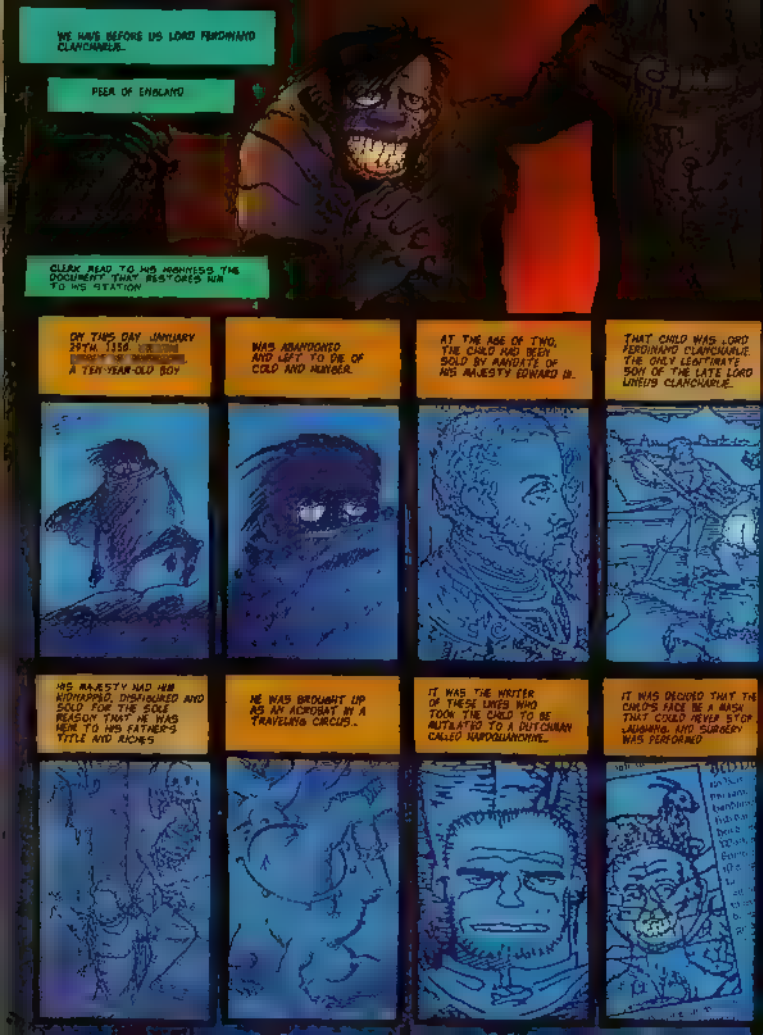
I KNOW YOUR FAMILY IS AN HONORABLE ONE NONE OF THEM HAVE EVER BEEN HANGED.
BUT DON'T TELL ME THESE PRICES AREN'T A CRIME I KNOW WHAT THINGS COST
@WYNPLANET
IN THE KING'S NAME! YOU! FOLLOW ME! THE REST OF YOU STAY HERE AND KEEP SILENT!
URSUS?
DON'T WORRY SON IT'S WARDEN-MAN. DO AS HE TELLS YOU
DON'T TALK UNTIL THEY QUESTION YOU OR YOU'LL BE LOST
I'LL FOLLOW YOU FROM A DISTANCE AND SEE WHERE THEY TAKE YOU.
I'LL SPEAK TO THE MAGISTRATES IT MUST BE A MISTAKE.
WE'LL ALL BE HOME WITH DEA AND DAD THIS EVENING
YOU'LL SEE!

NO! NOT THE TOWER!
OPEN THAT DOOR!
IN HIS MAJESTY'S NAME!
MY POOR CHILD!
HE COULD BE DEAD BEFORE SUNRISE. POOR BOY.
NOW HE'S ALONE, COMPLETELY ALONE.
END
CHAPTER

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS
THE ABYSS
4
YOURSELF IN TOTAL SILENCE
IF YOU DON'T ANSWER THE JUDGE YOU'LL BE ACCUSED OF THE WORST CRIME
BY NOT SAYING ANYTHING YOU CONFESS TO EVERYTHING
YOU CAN'T PRETEND YOU DON'T EXIST JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT TO REMAIN SILENT
ACCORDING TO THE LAW WE HAVE TO GIVE YOU THE HARSHEST SENTENCE
OR FROM EVERY ORIFICE OF YOUR BODY
SPEAK WRETCH! THE LAW ORDERS YOU TO SPEAK BEFORE WE EXTERMINATE YOU!

IF YOU PRETEND TO BE DUMB THINK OF YOUR TOMB WHICH IS ALSO SILENT
IF YOU PRETEND TO BE DEAF THINK OF YOUR SENTENCE
BRING THE YOUNG MAN CLOSER.
MOVE CLOSER!
WARDQUANONNE! NOW, DO YOU WISH TO CONFESS YOUR CRIME?

IT'S...IT'S HIM! IT'S HIM!
THIS IS THE KING'S WORK AND MINE!
HE WILLED IT AND I GAVE MY ART!
NOW LAUGH...
LAUGH FOR ETERNITY!
HAHAHAHA!
HE'S DEAD...HE DIED LAUGHING.
NO. THAT'S NOT TRUE! I DON'T KNOW THIS MAN!
I'M INNOCENT OF ALL HIS ACCUSATIONS!
I'M A PEACEFUL WANDERING MINSTREL
I'M THE MAN WHO LAUGHS"!
YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU AN INNOCENT MAN! AN INNOCENT WRETCH!


WE HAVE BEFORE US LORD FERDINAND CLANCHARLIE..
PEER OF ENGLAND
CLERK READ TO HIS HIGHNESS THE DOCUMENT THAT RESTORES HIM TO HIS STATION
ON THIS DAY JANUARY 29TH 1750 [redacted] A TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY
WAS ABANDONED AND LEFT TO DIE OF COLD AND HUNGER.
AT THE AGE OF TWO, THE CHILD HAD BEEN SOLD BY MANDATE OF HIS MAJESTY EDWARD III.
THAT CHILD WAS LORD FERDINAND CLANCHARLIE. THE ONLY LEGITIMATE SON OF THE LATE LORD LIONELS CLANCHARLIE..
HIS MAJESTY HAD HIM KIDNAPPED, DISFIGURED AND SOLD FOR THE SOLE REASON THAT HE WAS HEIR TO HIS FATHER'S TITLE AND RICHES
HE WAS BROUGHT UP AS AN ACROBAT IN A TRAVELING CIRCUS..
IT WAS THE WRITER OF THESE LINES WHO TOOK THE CHILD TO BE MUTILATED TO A DUTCHMAN CALLED HARDQUANONYME..
IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE CHILDS FACE BE A MASK THAT COULD NEVER STOP LAUGHING. AND SURGERY WAS PERFORMED

THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS DOCTOR CONQUEST'S SECRETS AND PROCEDURES

"BUCCA FISSA USQUE ALBES." [illegible] TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER [illegible]...

WE NAMED HIM SWIMFLAME EVEN WHEN HE GREW OLD HE COULD BE RECOGNIZED BY HIS "LAUGHING MASK"

EVEN AS I WRITE THIS, NARDUANONYME IS IMPRISONED IN CHATHAM ACCUSED OF ASSOCIATING WITH CHILD TRAFFICKERS.

ME, WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE, AND NARDUANONYME ARE THE ONLY ONES TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MOST SECRET AND DELICATE MATTER

[illegible] HAD MANAGED TO SURVIVE FROM OUR ARCABEZ TRANSACTION BUT TODAY WE HAD TO [illegible]

[illegible] WE ABANDONED THE BOY TO HIS DESTINY AND ARE OURSELVES AT THE MERCY OF THE SEA.

WE SWORE TO THE KING THAT WE'D KEEP OUR SECRET BUT NOT TO GOD WE FACE DEATH IN THE FURY OF THE STORM WITH RESIGNATION AND REPENTANCE

AND WE ENTRUST GOD WITH OUR SOULS AS WE ENTRUST THE WAVES WITH THIS CONFESSION OF OUR SINS MAY PROVIDENCE DO WITH IT AS IT WILL

SIGNED BY BERNARDUS VAN HALT PHYSICIAN AND NINE OTHER CREW MEMBERS

THIS CONFESSION HAS BEEN WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF THE ROYAL MANDATE ORDERING YOUR SALE

THE DEPOSITION IS RECOGNIZED AS LEGAL

SIR, YOU MAY TAKE POSSESSION OF ALL YOUR RIGHTS
IT'S A NIGHTMARE! IT'S ONLY A NIGHTMARE! WAKE ME!
I COME TO WAKE YOU YOUR LORDSHIP YOU'VE SLEPT FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS, DREAMING THAT YOU WERE ANYNPLACE. BUT YOU ARE A LORD.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN
IT MEANS THAT YOU'RE A LORD, LAWMAKER AND SUPREME JUDGE TO BE CLOTHED IN PURPLE AND CROWNED AS A PEER OF THE REALM
AND YOU WILL MARRY A DUCHESS, A KING'S DAUGHTER
THU
DEA...
OH, DEA...
HE FAINTED!
WE'RE ONLY FOLLOWING WARRANT'S ORDERS LEAVE TOWN TONIGHT
RUN TO THE COAST AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY OR THE LAW WILL DESTROY YOU!
I'VE NEVER DONE IT WITH A BLIND WOMAN
URGH
51

GRRRR!!
FORGET IT...
WE'LL GO WHEN MY [redacted] GETS BACK...
GWYNPLANET
HERE I WAS TOLD TO GIVE YOU THIS...BE CAREFUL! IT STINKS!
THEYRE HIS CLOTHES!
AND
AND
BLOOD
BLOOD!!
MY GOD! THEYVE KILLED HIM!!
GWYN
GWYN.
...BASTARDS!

THEY'VE..
MURDERED
..HIM.

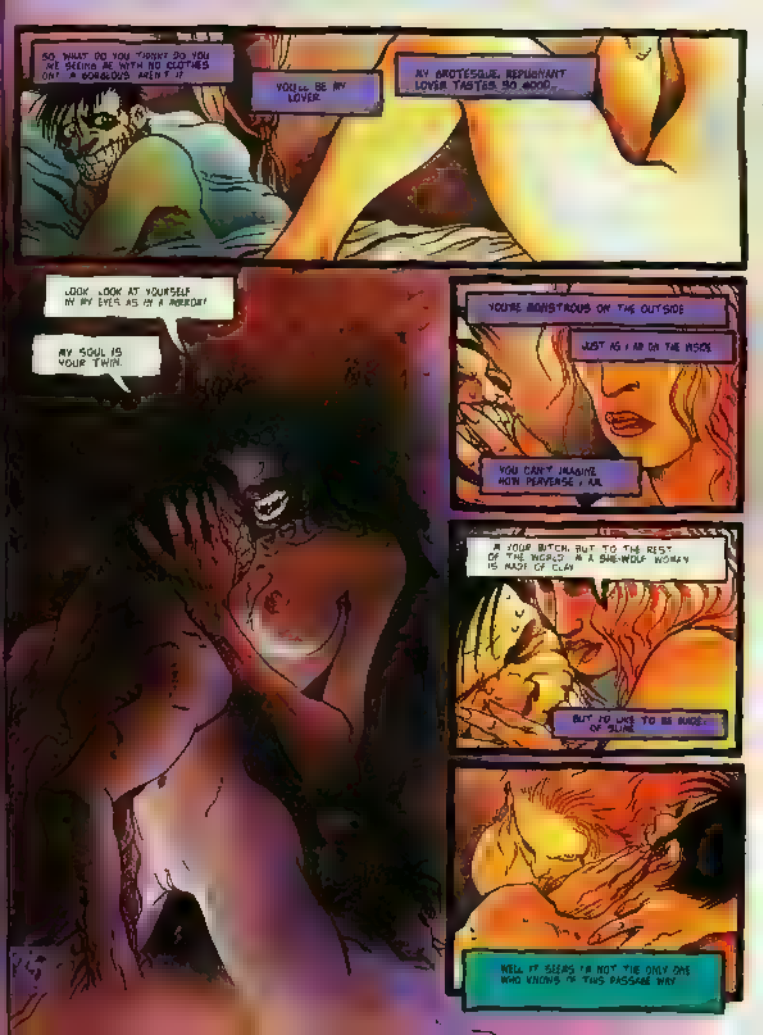
THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

THE FALL

5

DID YOU FOLLOW MY ORDERS?
ABSOLUTELY MY LORD
DID THEY BELIEVE YOU?
THAT CRAZY OLD MAN WEPT LIKE A CHILD
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIM RUBBING AND SQUEEZING THE BLOODY RAGS
THEY MUST DIE WITHIN THE WEEK IF MY PLANS ARE TO SUCCEED
AND THE POOR WRETCH MUST NEVER FIND OUT
DON'T WORRY, LORD BELLIN
SWYNPLAYNE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND HIS OLD FAMILY

I SAW THEM BRINGING YOU HERE
I SAW YOU AND I WANT YOU
YOU'RE SO HIDEOUS.
YOU'RE MARVELOUS!
YOU'RE THE MONSTER OF MY DREAMS
WHO ARE YOU?
I'M EVA.
EVA OF THE ABYSS.
YOU'RE THE APPLE OF HELL LIKE MEDEA, I TOO WANT A LOVER.
I WANT TO BE DEGRADED WITH YOU... PROVOKE YOU...


SO WHAT DO YOU THINK DO YOU SEE SEEING ME WITH NO CLOTHES ON? A GORGEOUS AREN'T I?
YOU... BE MY LOVER
MY GROTESQUE, REPUGNANT LOVER TASTES SO GOOD...
LOOK LOOK AT YOURSELF IN MY EYES AS IN A MIRROR!
MY SOUL IS YOUR TWIN.
YOU'RE MONSTROUS ON THE OUTSIDE
JUST AS I AM ON THE INSIDE
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW PERVERSE I AM
I YOUR BITCH. BUT TO THE REST OF THE WORLD I A SHE-WOLF WOMAN IS MADE OF CLAY
BUT I'D LIKE TO BE MADE OF SLIME
WELL IT SEEMS I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS OF THIS PASSAGE WAY

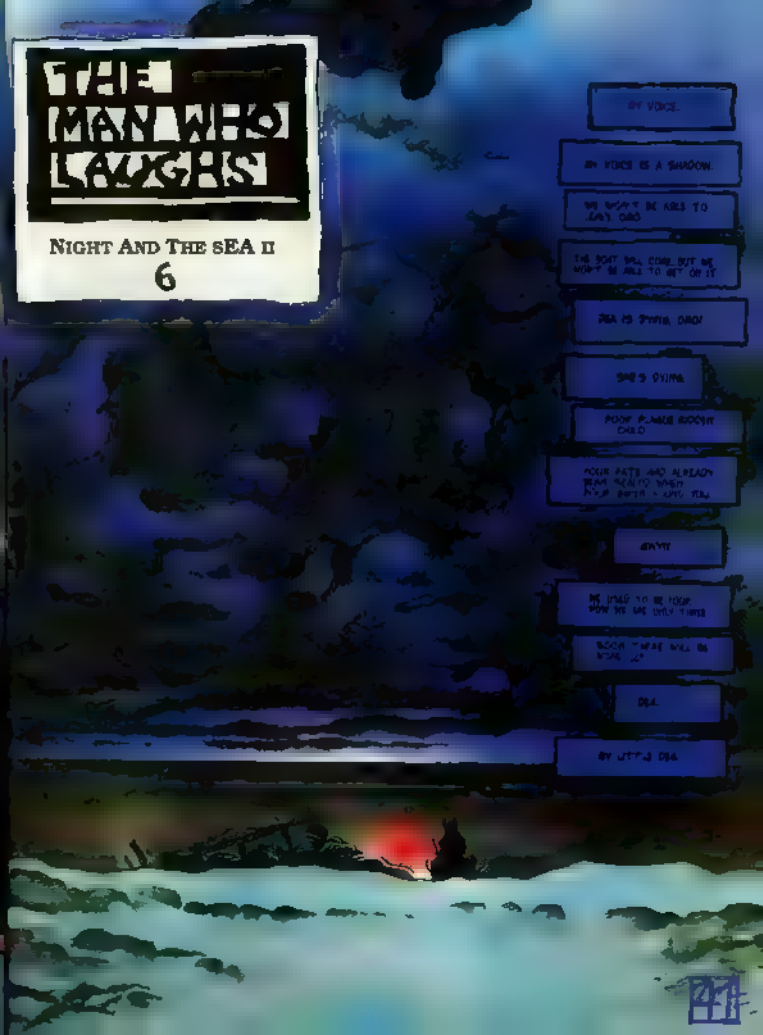
ISN'T THAT SO LADY JOSIANA?
LORD BELLEW! LEAVE THIS ROOM IMMEDIATELY!
LEAVE ME ALONE WITH MY LOVER OH..!
DON'T FORGET THAT YOU'RE THE BASTARD DAUGHTER OF A KING
BESIDES, THIS MAN CANNOT BE YOUR LOVER
BECAUSE HE IS TO BECOME YOUR HUSBAND
MY HUSBAND?
SINCE YOU WILL BE MY HUSBAND I'M LEAVING YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO ENJOY MY COMPANY
I'LL LOOK FOR A LOVER SOMEWHERE ELSE..
YOU'LL GET USED TO HER DON'T WORRY
NOW WE'LL DEAL WITH SOMETHING WHICH CONCERNS US BOTH YOUR PLACE IN COURT
AND THE RICHES WE'LL BOTH REAP FROM THAT
I..I MUST FIND JESUS AND DEA..
36

RELAX YOUR FRIENDS.
WHERE? WHERE ARE THEY?
LET'S JUST SAY THAT THEY'RE DEAD
BWAHAHAHOOOHONGOOO
URSUS: WHAT'S THE RATTLE?
I WAS DREAMING ONLY DREAMING MY GOD!
MY BODY WAS BEING POSSESSED BY DEVILS
AND A NURSE WAS ROCKING A DEAD BABY
IT WAS...IT FELT SO SO REAL
IT WAS LIKE A DEATH-OMEN

LET'S SAY THEY WON'T BOTHER YOU ANY MORE
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DRESSED ME LIKE A NOBLEMAN
THE POOR DON'T CARRY DAGGERS.
DAMNED IDIOT!
I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND THE SCOUT
AND I'M THE ONE WHO'S GIVEN YOUR PAST BACK TO YOU
YOU'VE KILLED MY FAMILY MY ONLY FAMILY
YOU'VE GIVEN ME A PAST I DO NOT WANT
I'LL DEPRIVE YOU YOUR FUTURE
I'LL YANK YOUR DAMNED HEAD OFF!
GOD.. GOD

YOU'RE...
YOU'RE GOING TO DESTROY...
THUD
EVERYTHING
THUMP
RIGHT
SCROT
YOU'LL SLOWLY BLEED TO DEATH
THE BUCKLES ON YOUR COAT OF ARMS HAVE BEEN ASSHARPEN BY THE SLOW IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO TAKE IT OFF TO STOP THE BLEEDING.
MAYBE YOUR MEN WILL BE ABLE TO HELP YOU.
IF YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE COME TO BY FAIRLY I'LL CALL THEM.
SACK
OH GOD MY ARM HELP ME DAMN YOU!
ARGH YOU'RE GOING TO DESTROY EVERYTHING WE COULD'VE
THE MAIL IS GET TING SOAKED OH GOD ! ! ONLY
TOLD MY SERVANTS TO THREATEN THEM SO THEY WOULD LEAVE THE COUNTRY
IS THAT ALL
THEY WERE GIVEN YOUR CLOTHES THEY HAD BEEN SOAKED IN THE BLOOD OF A PLAGUE ROTTEN DOG.
COULDN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES YOU'D HAVE COME BACK TO THOSE LOUSY YEARPS
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND I DID IT FOR BOTH OF US
YOU'RE A KEY PART OF MY PLANS GOD CALL MY MEN
CALL...
GWYNPLANE!..

YOU CAN'T LET ME DIE LIKE THIS, BRYNHILD!!
HAVE YOU SEEN THAT RADIANT HE'S GALLOPING AWAY AS IF POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL WHO IS HE?
LORD FERDINAND CLANCHARLIE..
I NEVER SAW HIM BEFORE.
I DO...WHEN THEY CALLED HIM "THE MAN WHO LAUGHS"
URSUS?
YES DEA
I FEEL I... I THINK I HAVE A FEVER.
FIGHT IT OFF CHILD FIGHT IT OFF. SOON WE'LL GET TO THE SEA AND WE'LL FIND A BOAT, AND WE'LL LEAVE THIS DARNED COUNTRY.
END
CHAPTER 5


THE MAN WHO LAUGHS
NIGHT AND THE SEA II
6
MY VOICE...
MY VOICE IS A SHADOW...
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO LAY OARS
THE BOAT WILL COME, BUT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET ON IT
SEA IS DYING, DAD!
SHE'S DYING
POOR PLANET ROCKYR CHILD
YOUR PATH AND ALREADY BEAM READY WHAT NEW BIRTH AWAITS YOU
ANYA!
WE USED TO BE FOUR NOW WE ARE ONLY THREE
BOOM THERE WILL BE MORE...
DEAL
MY LITTLE DEAL

YES. I KNOW WHO YOU MEAN THEY WERE THROWN OUT OF TOWN BY SOLDIERS
ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO. NO THEY BURNT THE CART
THEY STOPPED HERE. WE GAVE THEM SOME FOOD AND THEY LEFT AT DAWN
YES. I THINK THEY SAID THEY THE SEA
I'M STUPID TO KEEP TALKING TO MYSELF WITHOUT THINKING THAT IT MAY WAKE HER
POOR DEAR. I'M GOING TO SEE HER DIE.
FIRST GWYN. AND NOW YOU...NOW I'VE LOVED YOU BOTH.
I'VE HAD SO MANY DREAMS...IT MUST BE THE FEVER. OH, GOD!
OUR TIME ON THIS EARTH HAS COME TO AN END.

YES. I KNOW WHO YOU MEAN THEY WERE THROWN OUT OF TOWN BY SOLDIERS
ABOUT [illegible] AGO. NO THEY [illegible] THE CART
THEY STOPPED HERE WE GAVE THEM SOME FOOD AND THEY LEFT AT DAWN
YES. I THINK THEY SAID THEY WERE HEADING FOR THE SEA
I'M STUPID TO KEEP TALKING TO MYSELF WITHOUT THINKING THAT IT MAY WAKE HER
POOR DEAR...I'M GOING TO SEE HER DIE..
FIRST GWYN, AND NOW YOU. HOW I'VE LOVED YOU BOTH.
I'VE HAD SO MANY DREAMS..IT MUST BE THE FEVER..OH GOD
OUR TIME ON THIS EARTH HAS COME TO AN END..
OMG?
HOW DO YOU HAVE SUCH A STRANGE LOOK IN YOUR EYE.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
OMG OMG, MY DEAR NEIGHBOR
DO YOU THINK THERE'S A MANY HOUSES ACQUAINTANCE
IF THE GIRL HAD THE FEVER THAT'S BAD. VERY BAD
THEY TOOK THE ROAD TO THE SHORE. THE DORMOUTH ROAD
YOU CAN'T GO AFTER THEM YOU'LL ONLY CATCH THE PLAGUE. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THEM
THEY MUST BE ALMOST DEAD BY NOW

ORC?
WHY DO YOU HAVE SUCH A STRANGE LOOK IN YOUR EYES?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
ORO, ORO, MY DEAR FRIEND
DO YOU THINK THERE'S A FAIRY HIDDEN SOMEWHERE?
IF THE GIRL HAD THE FEVER ...THAT'S BAD VERY BAD
THEY TOOK THE ROAD TO THE SHORE, THE DORMITH ROAD
YOU CAN'T GO AFTER THEM. YOU'LL ONLY CATCH THE PLAGUE. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THEM.
THEY MUST BE ALMOST DEAD BY NOW
43

URSUS! DEAR
IT'S ME!
I'M ALIVE!!
I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE, OMO...! CAN'T ...I CAN'T WATCH.
THE LITTLE ONE
OR
FATHER!
FORGIVE ME AND FOR...GIVE ME MY COWARDICE.
MERCIFUL BARBERS MAKE THE WORST WOUNDS.
IT'S NOT HARD TO DIE
NO, OMO... DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THAT MAKE?
FATHER!!
"...I LIVE IN DARKNESS ...BUT I DO MY BEST TO SEE CLEARLY."

BURY ME OUTSIDE THE CHURCH CEMETERY ..I DON'T CARE..GAD..
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE MY..GOD! ..GOD! THIS HURTS..
THERE WERE FOUR OF US..
A LONG ROAD.. AND NO HORSE..
GWYN! IS THAT YOU, GWYN?
FATHER..FATHER..WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
DEAD?
BY GOD!..IT'S YOU! I KNEW IT, I KNEW IT!
HOW COULD YOU HAVE DIED? YOU WERE SO ALIVE..AND YOU WERE ALWAYS, ALWAYS WITH ME..
I COULD FEEL YOUR BREATH ON MY CHEEKS..YOUR HANDS IN MY HAIR..
ISN'T THAT TRUE? ..I'M DYING.. WANTED TO GO TO THE GRAVE IF YOU WERE THERE..BY GOD..
BY POOR SON..
..WITH HIS LOOKS..
HE COULD ONLY BE..A CRIMINAL OR..A PROPHET
I KEEP HEARING HIS VOICE! GOD..
THIS..THIS IS..
THIS IS A LONG SHOOTING..
REPENT..
86

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU? I'M AN ENGLISH PEER. I'LL MAKE THEM PAY FOR IT...
IT'S SO DARK. MY LIPS ARE BURNING...
I KNOW WHAT IT IS.
WILL YOU REMEMBER? NOT REMEMBER MY VOICE...DON'T FORGET THE SOUND OF MY VOICE...AT NIGHT, WHEN YOU'RE ASLEEP, I'LL COME AND WHISPER IN YOUR EAR...
WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL IF WE COULD STAY TOGETHER FOR EVER?
LET'S LIVE, DEAR
OH...DON'T LET ME GO!
I CAN SEE THE LIGHT...!
THE...
...LIGHT...
NOOOOOOOO!!!

SOON IT WILL BE DAYLIGHT..
NEVER TO WAKE AGAIN..
NEVER TO FEEL SWEET DESIRE..
I'M COMING, DEA..
I'M WITH YOU..

THE LAUGHTER ETCHED INTO MY FACE WAS ETCHED BY A KING. WERE SUCH LAUGHTER SATAN'S, THEN GOD WOULD BE GUILTY.
"THE MAN WHO LAUGHS" VICTOR HUGO. 1869
END